

LIMBO
LANE
GAMES

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ugo: Howdy, I'm Yugo! I'm the Big cheese 'round these parts- those characters, funky colors, andious set pieces are All My Fault. I'm sorry. Or Thank you, if you like. I think my best work thus far in career is entirely localized in this e. GGG really helped me grow asrtist- I'm so proud!!

Day: I'm Day- I did all the programming, 3D modeling, production direction, puzzle/mechanic design, and a lot of the writing. We're an intimidated little 2-person team, so every bit of work that one of us did was checked by the other! When you play Great God Grom, hope you can feel how much of a passion project it is.

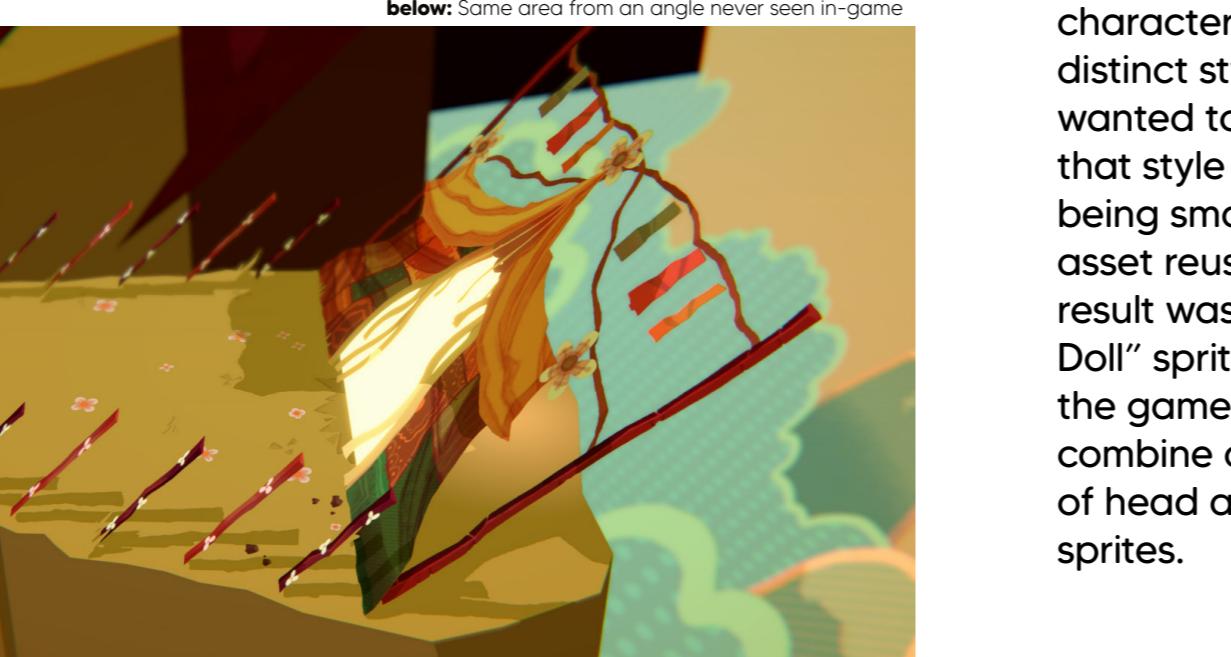
: It's kind of amazing to look at the evolution from our previous game, Smile For to Great God Grove (2024). The jump in scope both story-wise and graphics wise did the two of us bite off more than we could chew? Maybe, maybe not. But I think the result is pretty damn impressive, and I hope you're impressed too! You're about to embark on a little tour of what was rattling around our coconuts as we designed this game.

art style of Great God Grove feels like a natural evolution. It's more relaxed now, with straight lines, and more lively, wiggly ones. It's like it grew up a bit and learned to take itself less seriously- in a good way, of course. Naturally, I have hand tremors- I suppressed them in my earlier work like *Smile For Me* (Owch! Painful!), but by the time Great God Grove started ramping up, I had learned how to live with them and incorporate them into my art style.

Art



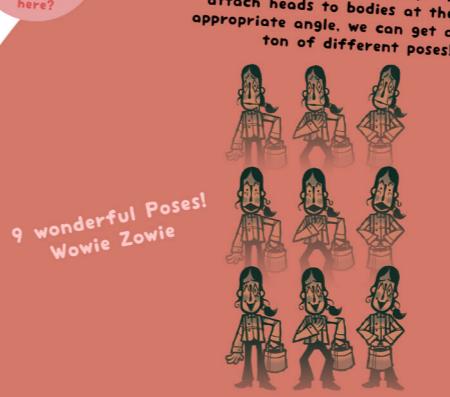
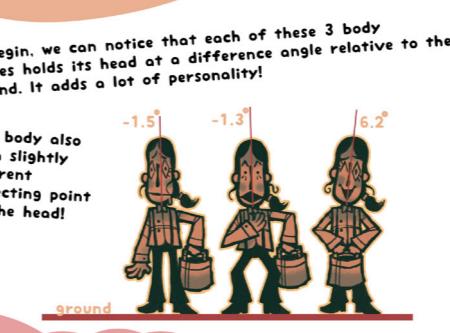
top-left: First concept painting of in-game art style
bottom-left: In-game screenshot of the same area



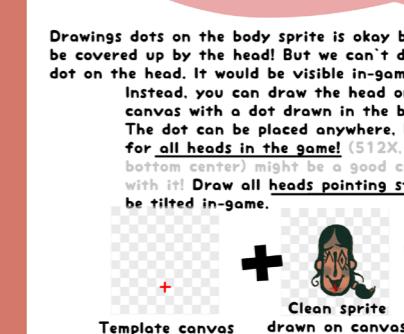
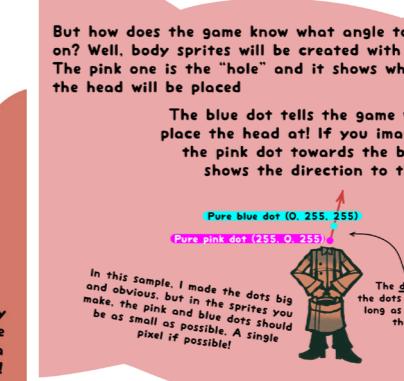
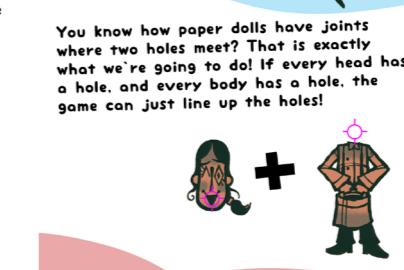
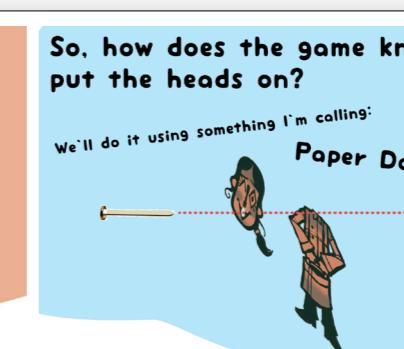
below: Same area from an angle never seen in-game

Day: Great God Grove is split between two perspectives: god scenes- fully 3d modeled- and overworld areas- entirely made of 2D sprites.

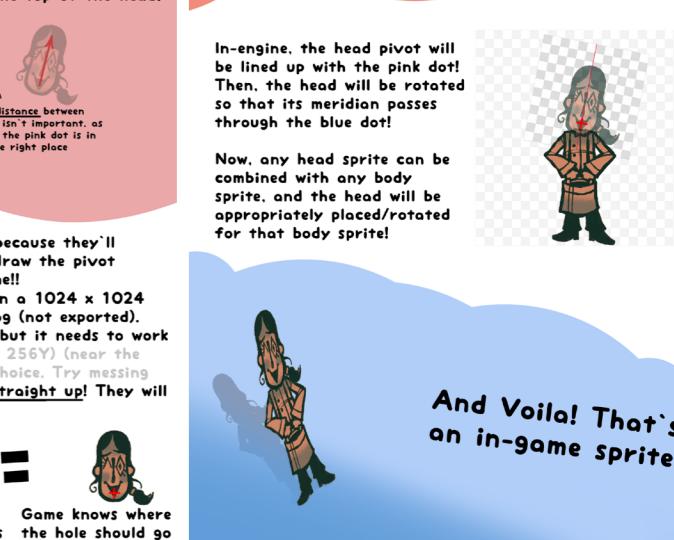
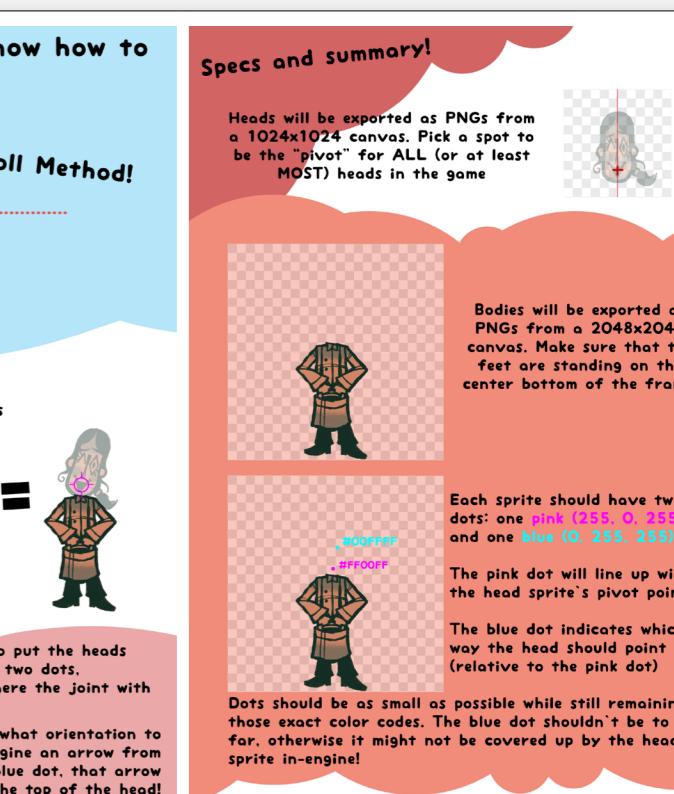
We wanted the overworld to have a more painterly feel than Smile For Me; something that looked like like a picture-book illustration. To do this, sprites in Great God Grove are at a 45° angle to the ground. This differs from most games with 3D worlds and 2D sprites, which have their sprites at a 90° angle to the ground (the “paper mario perspective”). The 45° solution looks very nice, but results in a lot of restrictions, such as no sprite being able to rotate along the Z-axis without intersecting the ground plane.



above: Internal document by Day explaining the Paper Doll Sprite system to Yugo for the first time



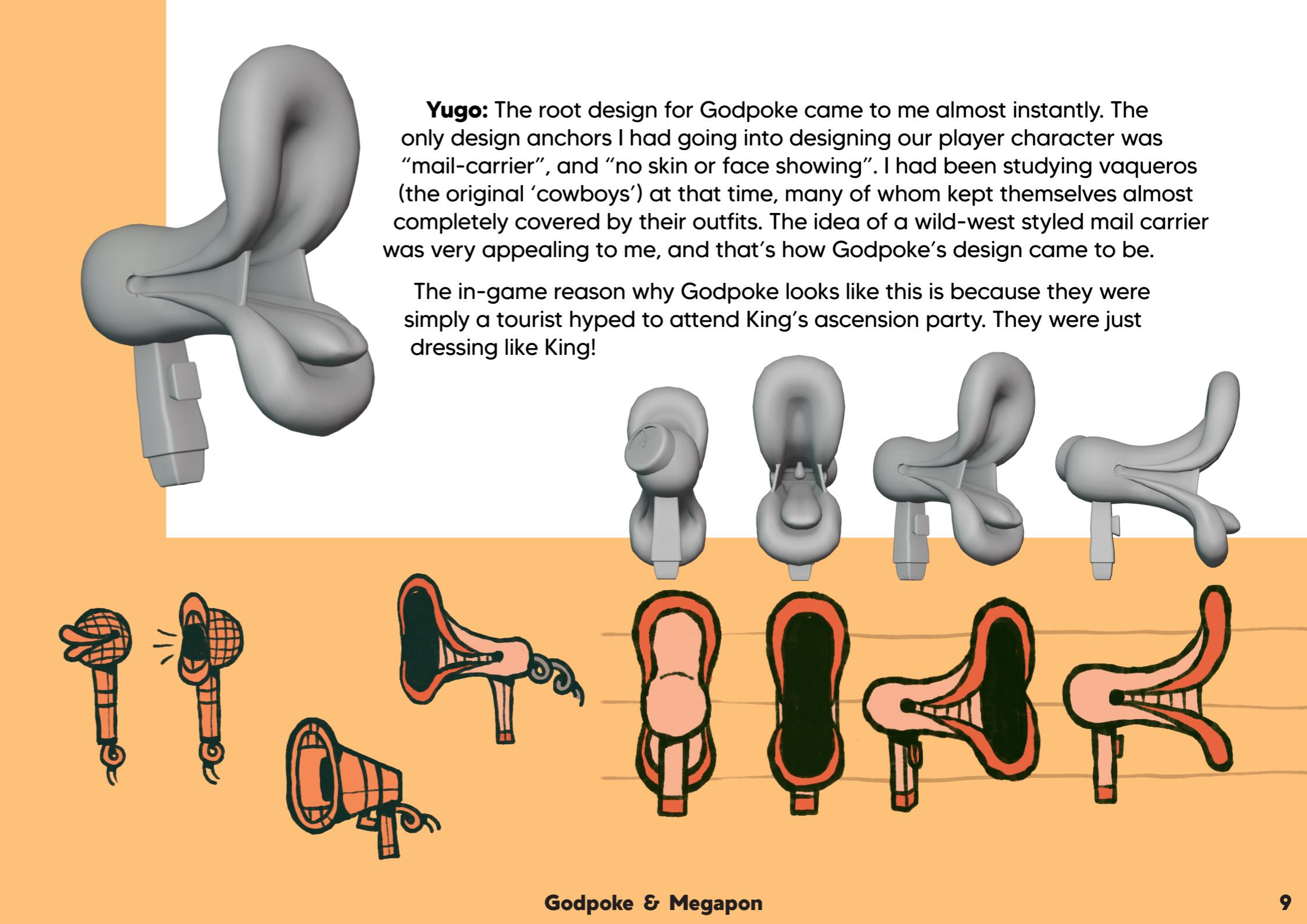
Template canvas + **Clean sprite drawn on canvas** = **Game knows where the hole should go**



And Voila! That's an in-game sprite!



Day: Great God Grove is the first game we've made with a visible protagonist. Thematically, it was important that the game feel like the player's adventure, no matter who the player is. Therefore the protagonist had to be nonspecific enough to be a self-insert for most players. Yugo designed a character with a covered face and covered skin, to represent as few identifying traits as possible.







left: Character concept sketches for Skolopendra and Sirena by Samanthuel Louise Gilson

Yugo: Our guest characters were all designed starting from sketches by friends. The lovely Sirena and Skolopendra were designed from sketches by Samanthuel (Splendidland), who made FRANKEN RPG and Megaman Sprite Comic, and worked on Deltarune. We both love Leiji Mautsumoto's nearly-identical women and you can see that inspiration in Sirena.

Razzma was designed by artist Val Eerie, who used his Mexican and bigender identity as inspiration. She's one of my favorite characters in the game!



above: Razzma character concept by Val Eerie

Guest Character Designs

Day: With games (as with books) it's often a good idea to write the first chapter last, once you know exactly what you need to set up. We started bringing in guest character designs late in development, when the Grove Cove (chapter 1) was the last undesigned area. This is why all of the guest characters appear in the Cove, with the exception of Cottin in BuzzHuzz.

Three of the game's guest character designs were made for a contest using our free face-designing game FACE LOVE! (2020). Players posted screenshots of faces they made, and 3 designs made it in. Because all of the face-pieces in FACE LOVE! were drawn by Yugo, they only needed minimal redesign to fit in the God Grove style.

right: FACE LOVE! (web, 2020) screenshots taken 2022 for character design contest. From left to right: Marsha Silvertongue by Bella Moore, Cottin Candie by noroalria, Housecat Man by TheSpryte



above: Housecat Man character concept by TheSpryte

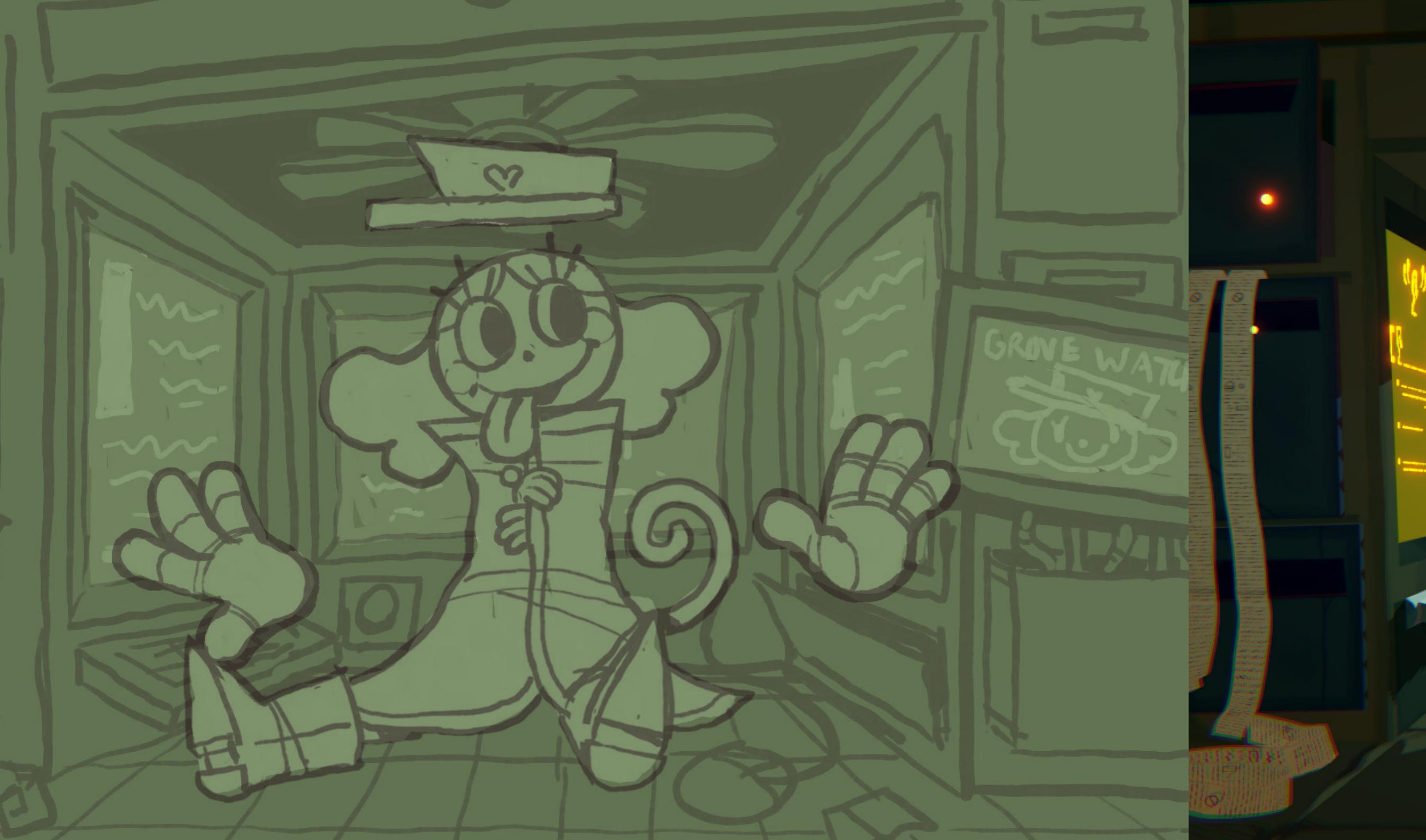
Guest Character Designs



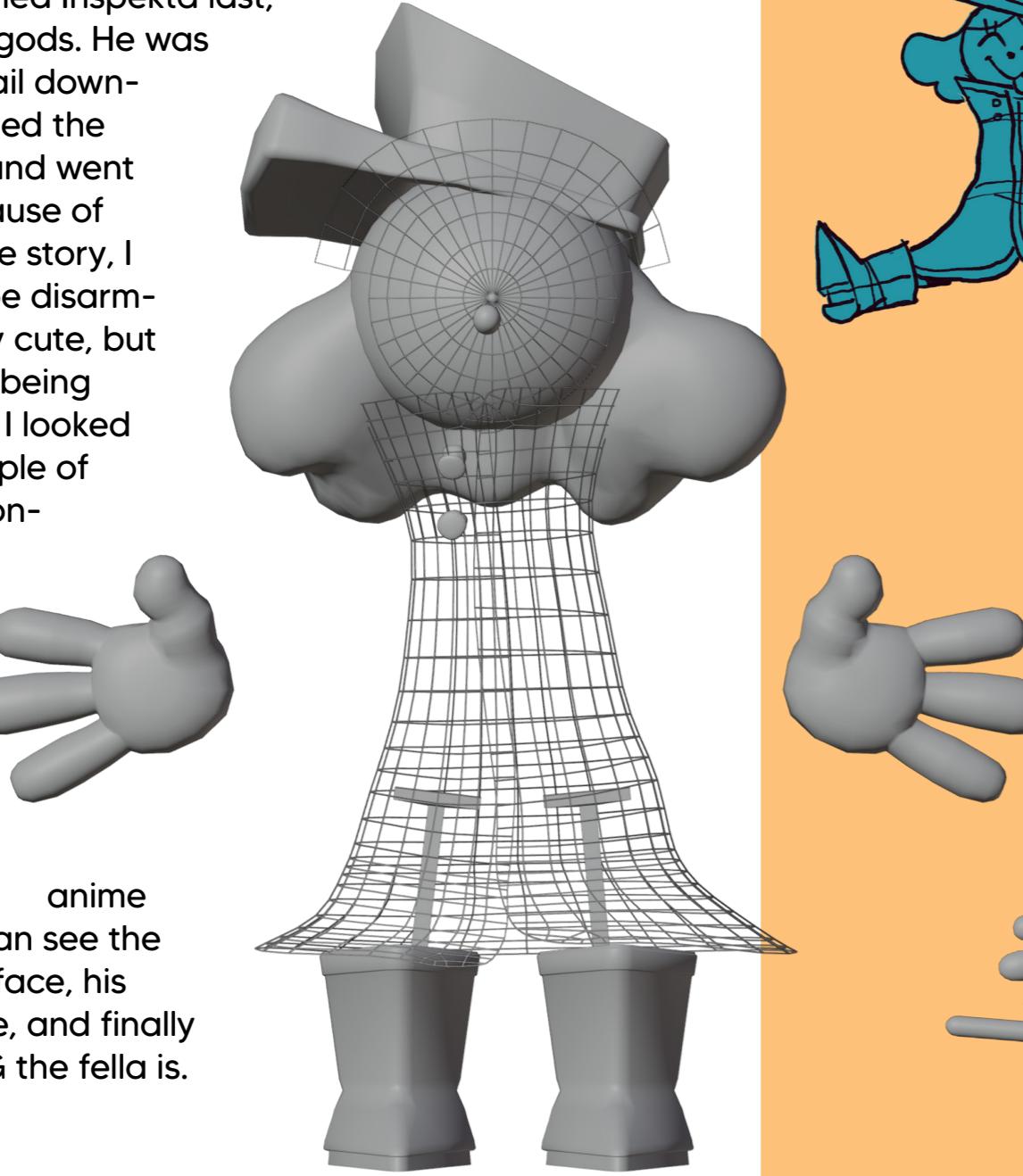
Yugo: Capochin's name was brewed via an extremely stupid 3-layer-pun. "Capo", the mafia leadership rank (the Bizzyboys being the goons, he their wrangler), "capuchin" the monkey, and finally, it all together sounding like "captain". It's not very smart and thus, is perfect for him.

The real answer as to why the Bizzyboys are all like that... Well, I was watching *The Sopranos* for the first time and the idea of adorable tiny idiot mafiosos appealed to me. That and uh, how it relates to the themes of the game of course.

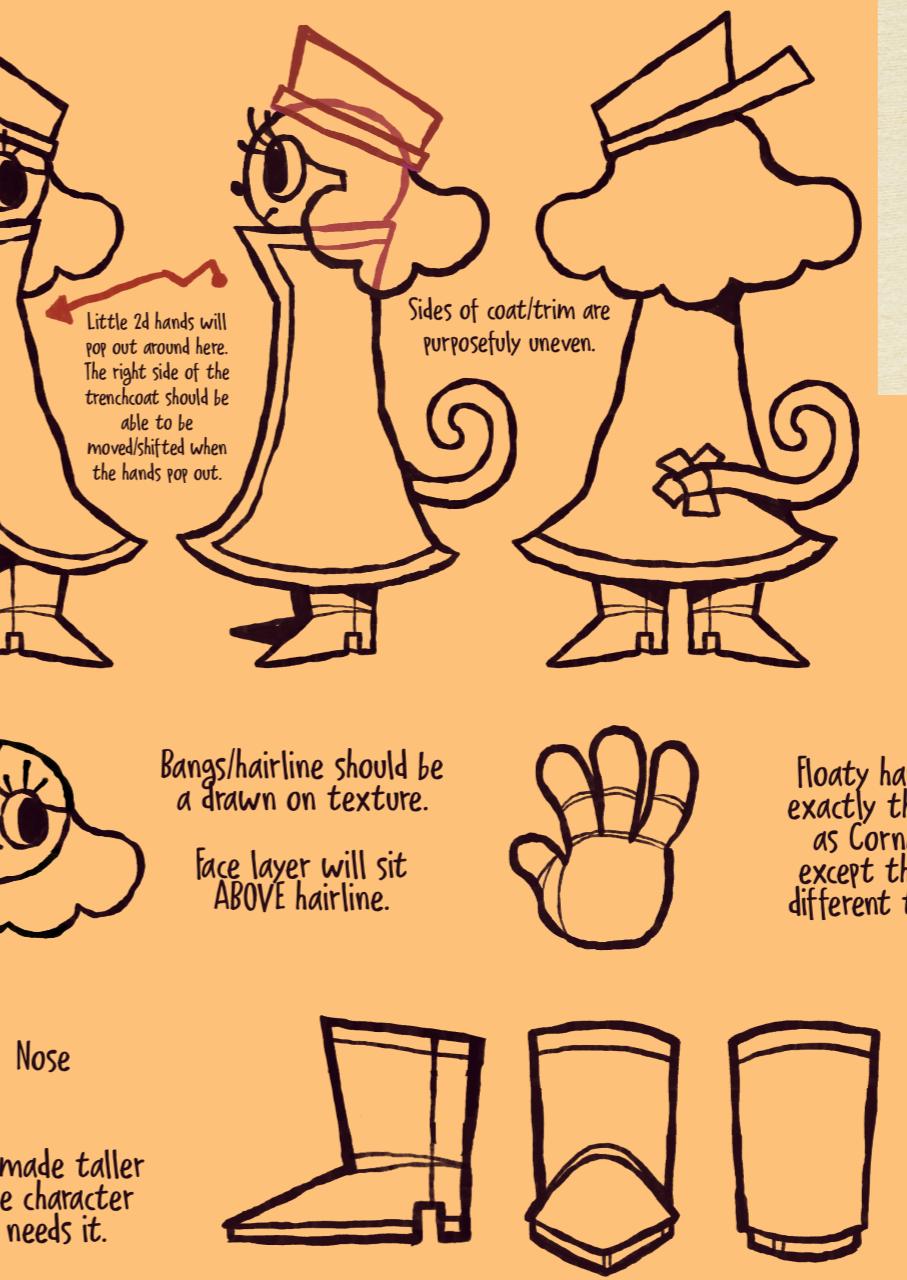
Day: The Bizzyboys' names were originally 1 letter each as an internal shorthand early in development when they didn't have any distinguishing characteristics. As the Bizzyboys' story came together, their abbreviated names turned into motifs used to symbolize their plight- how identity can be flattened and used as a dangling carrot by a fascist establishment. P's story of rebellion only came together late in the writing stage- but to me, it's the crux of what the game is about.



Yugo: I designed Inspekta last, out of all of the gods. He was a hard one to nail down- I actually designed the Bizzyboys first, and went from there. Because of his position in the story, I wanted him to be disarmingly, sickeningly cute, but also capable of being genuinely scary. I looked to a great example of this for inspiration- Charlotte from Madoka Magica, which I'm told has traumatized an entire generation of anime watchers. You can see the influence in the face, his eyes in the finale, and finally how dang LONG the fella is.

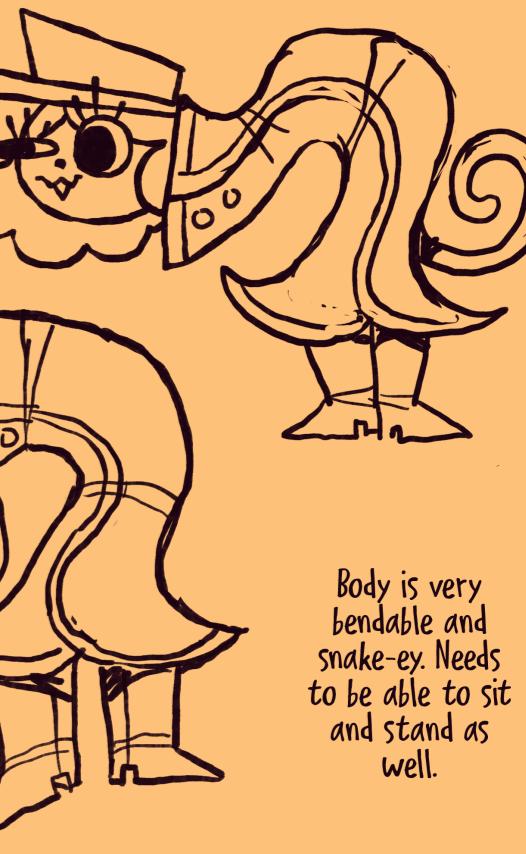


Inspekta

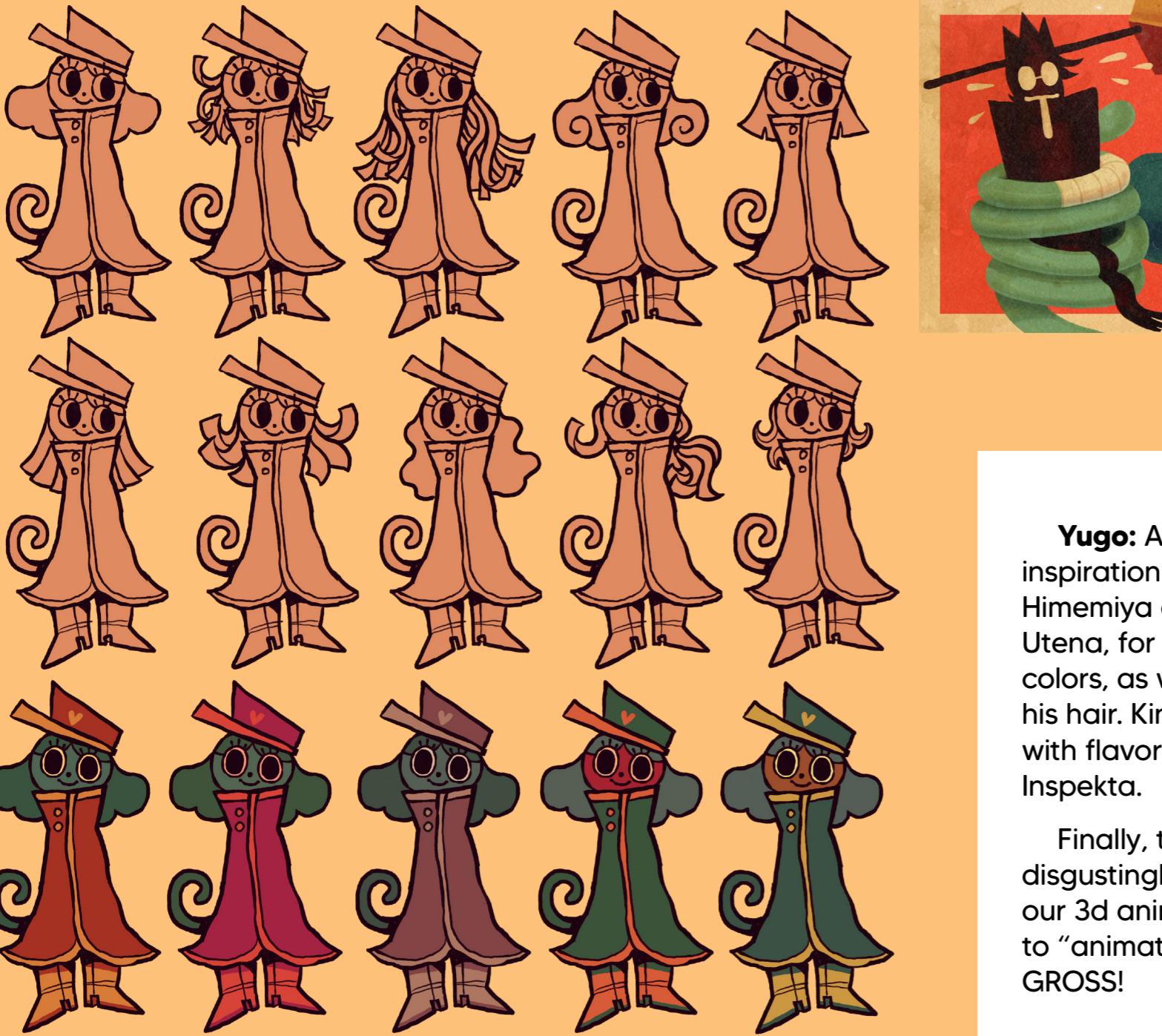


Yugo: Inspekta's odd "bending over backwards" pose was inspired by the way shamans from Paracas textiles were depicted in textiles almost 3000 years ago.

Inspekta



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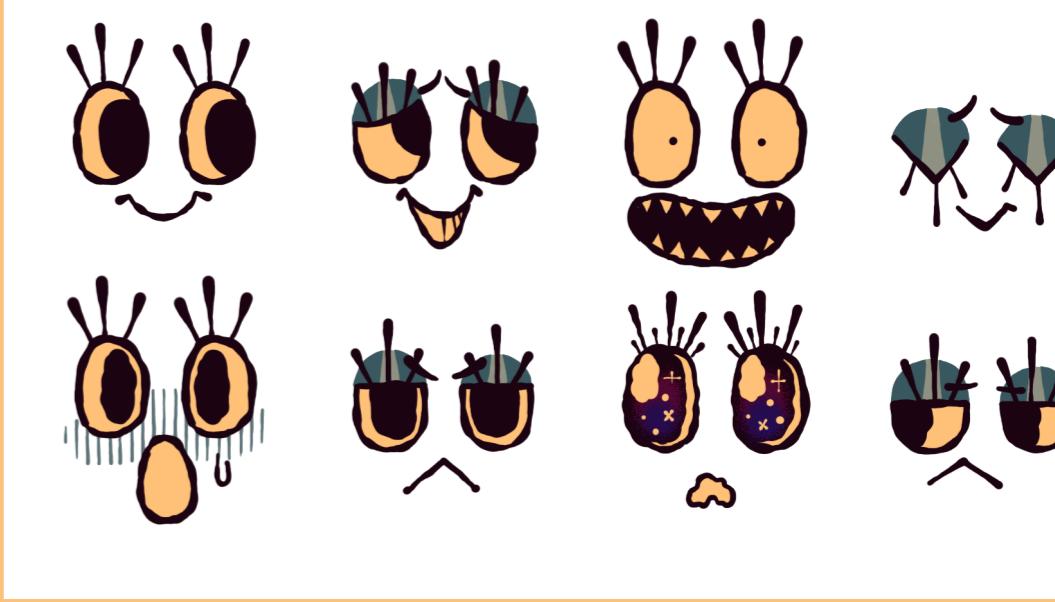


Inspekta



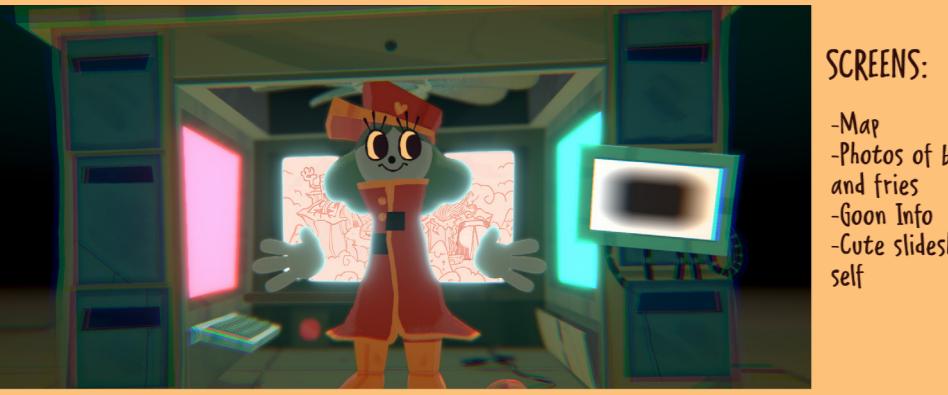
Yugo: Another chunk of inspiration came from Anthy Himemiya of Revolutionary Girl Utena, for his outfit's design/ colors, as well as the shape of his hair. King was also designed with flavors of RGU, as foil to Inspekta.

Finally, to add to how disgustingly cute he is, I asked our 3d animator Jack Cornish to "animate him like a plushie". GROSS!



Inspekta





Map! Lineart simplification like this probably?



DESK PROPS:



CRUMPLED PAPER
(re-use other model?)



STAMP



MEDICAL TAPE



Books
(re-use Click Clack's)



MARKERS



TICKET TO
THE SPIES' SHOW



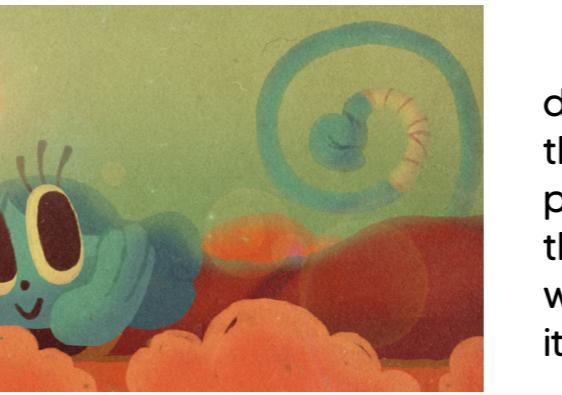
SCREENS:

- Map
- Photos of burgers and fries
- Goon Info
- Cute slideshow of self



Ordering takeout? Just looking at food pics? Mysterious...

Goon Info File



Day: The clutter on top of Inspeka's desk changes periodically throughout the game. Yugo designed a ton of 3D props and papers, then I hand-placed them for each chapter. It was a lot of work, but it's worth it for the slow reveal.

Day edits 2022/04/07:

I love this! I did a little edit pass, my main goal is to make the NYC slightly less intense, and turn up the twee a little? tune down the Bugs Bunny, tune up the Porky Pig? The Bronx accent should still be legible in all the Yews and N-Apostrophes. Between the homonyms and the leading questions, it should feel like he's not a very good listener.

"People are always sayin' "Peas-and-Quiet." WELL, PEAS AIN'T QUIET, POKEY! Peace is LOUD! To get that sweet, sweet CHANGE, ya need a RUCKUS! YER WITH ME, AIN'T YA?"

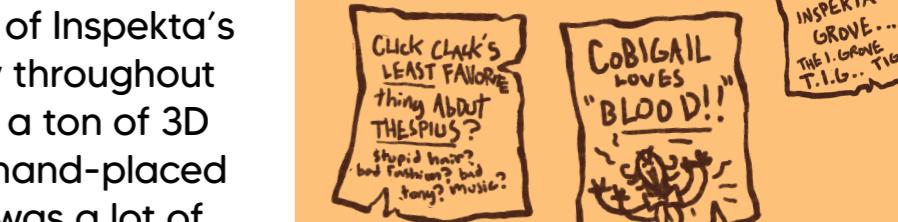
Speech affects:

- "you" → *yew* / "your" → *yer* / "you're" → *yewr* / "the" → *tha*
- His various misspeaks go unquestioned or unnoticed by him
- He tends to unwittingly replace saying with homonyms, emphasized by hyphens
- Lots of -y suffixes added to words for twee-ness
- Lots of appeals to your emotions, leading questions, putting words in your mouth

above:

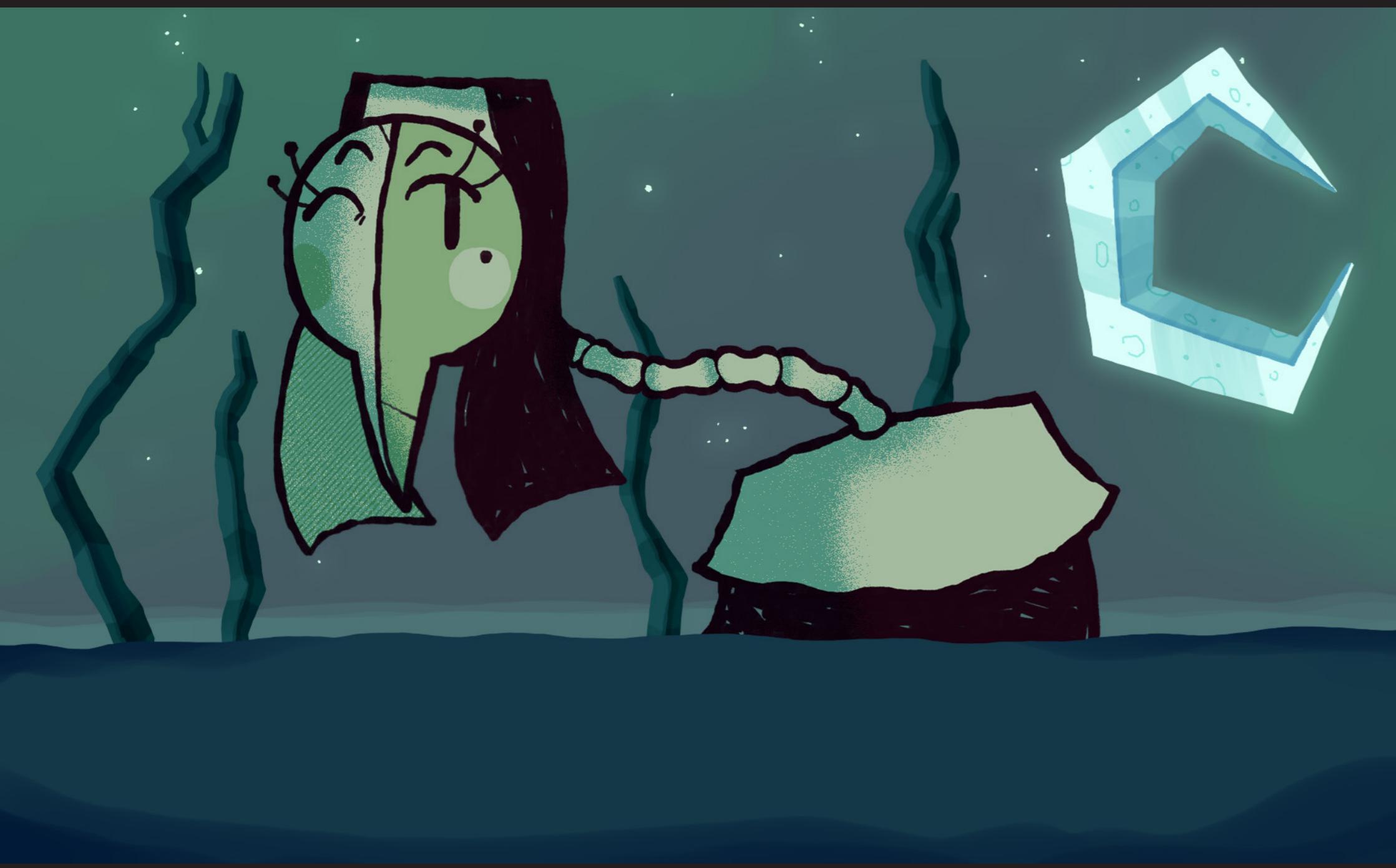
Excerpt from internal Inspeka voice document

Designing a stylized voice is my favorite part of writing silly characters, and the Grove has a lot of them. When trying to keep a huge cast of characters straight in your head, it helps when they have tics and distinct mnemonics that make their dialogue stand out- but those tics should also tell you something about the character. Inspeka's voice is closely related to his personality and flaws.



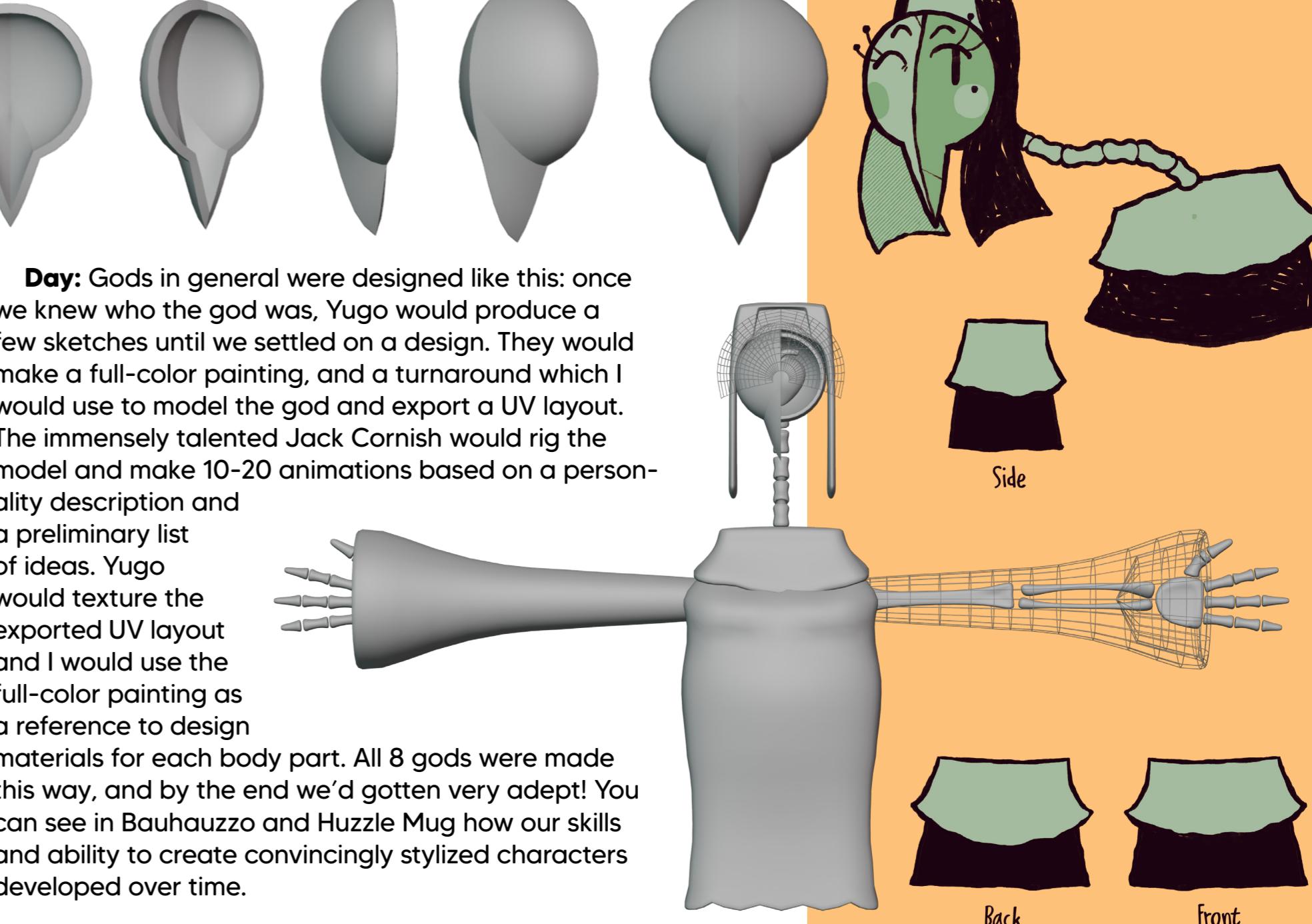
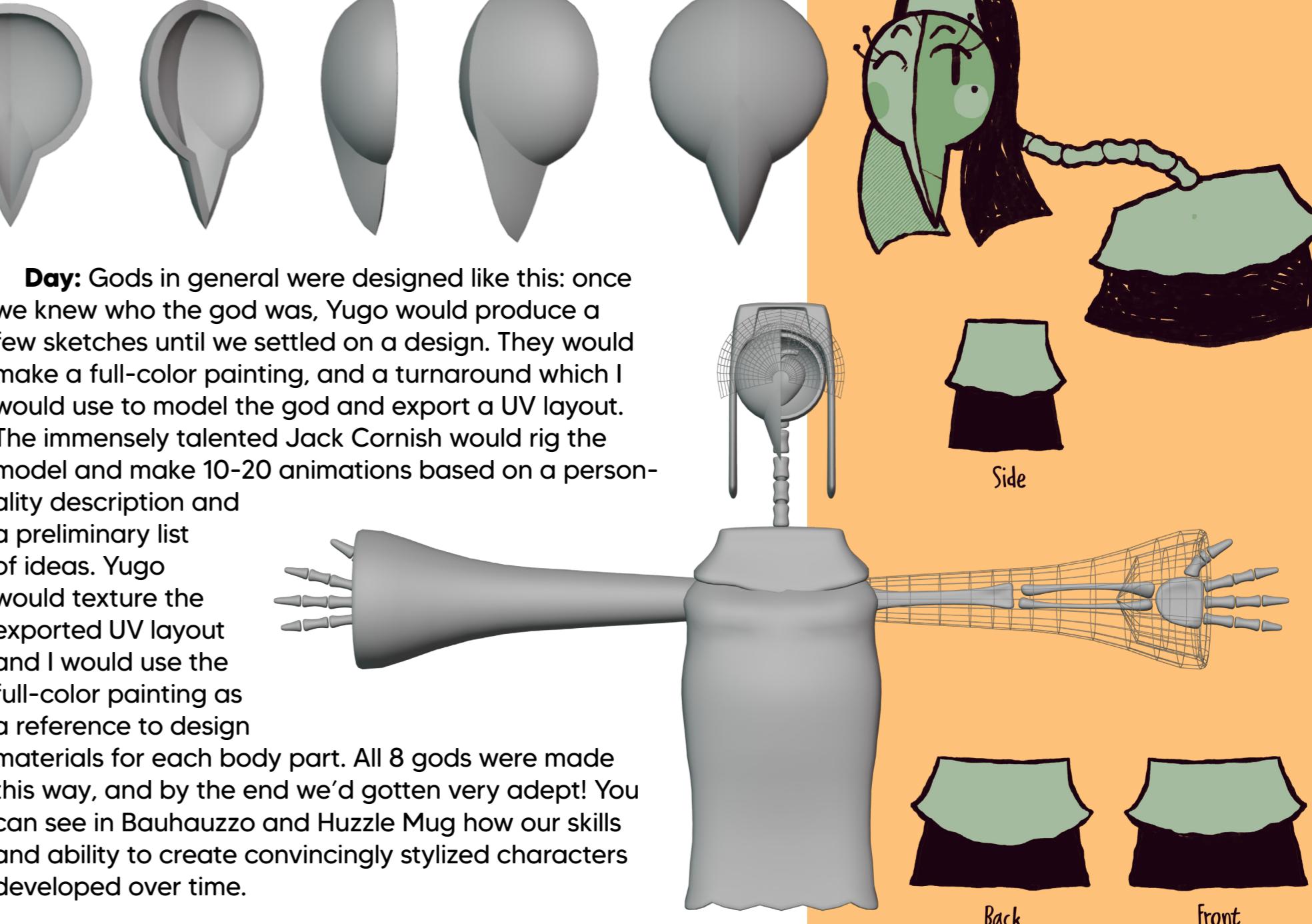
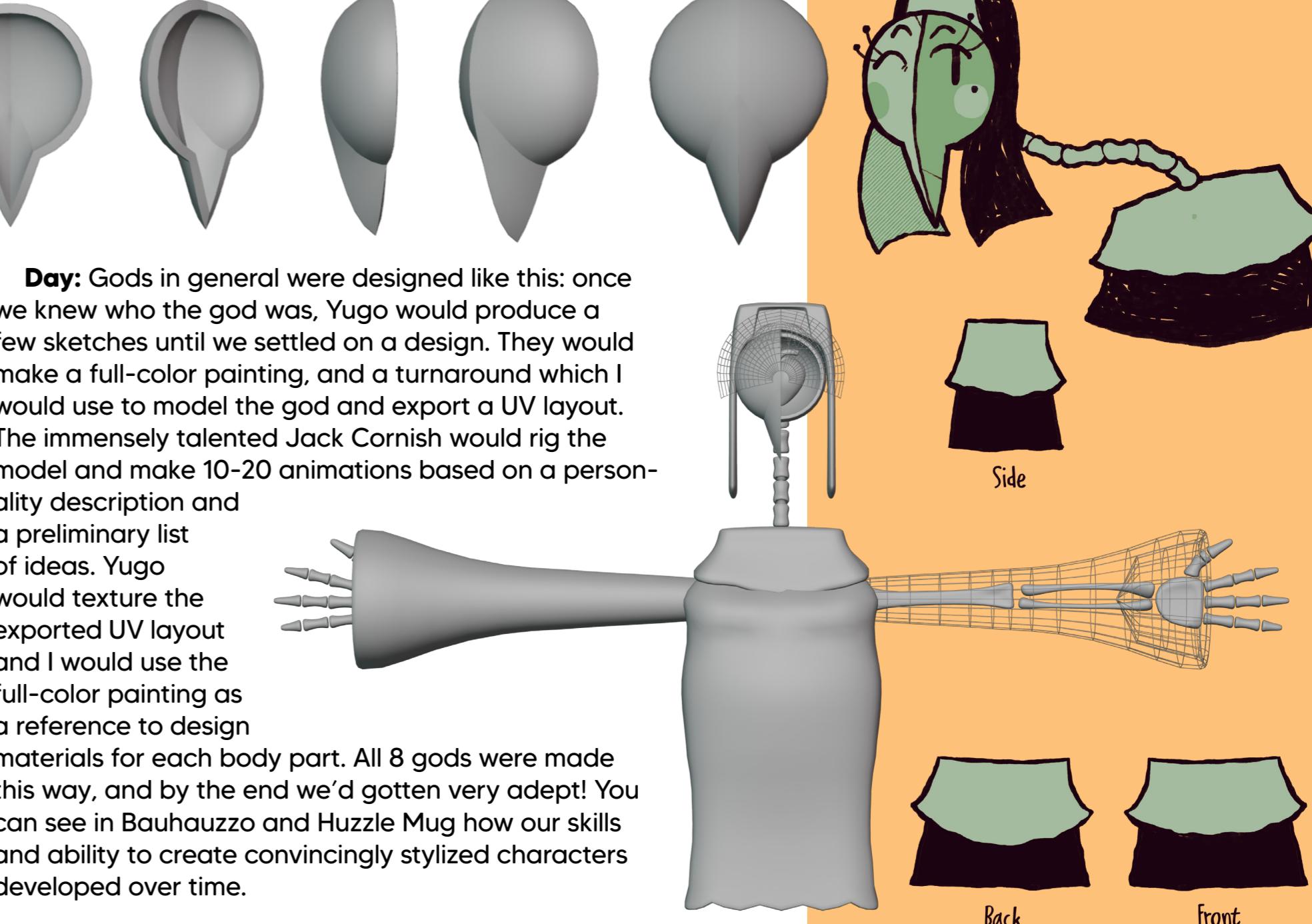
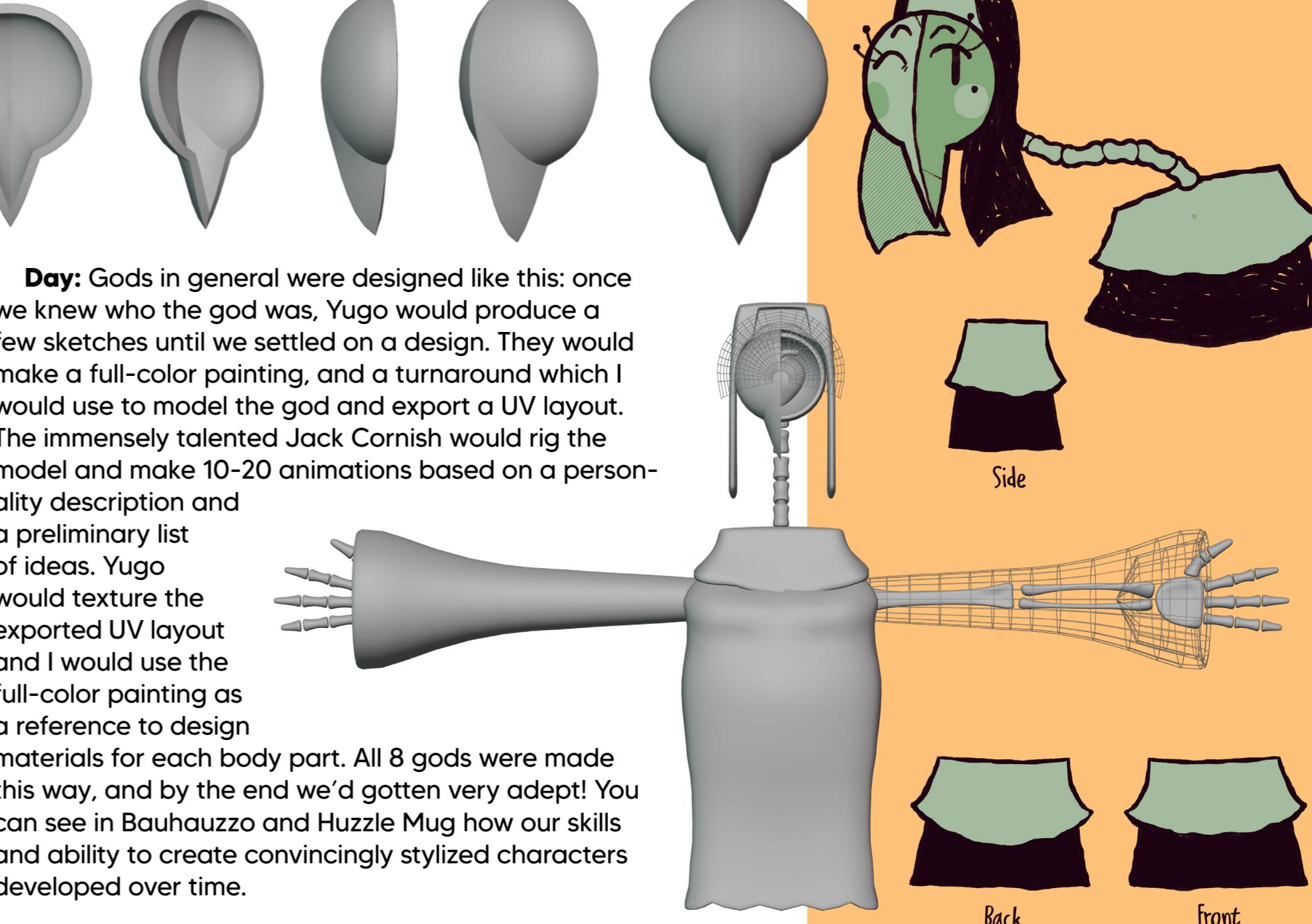
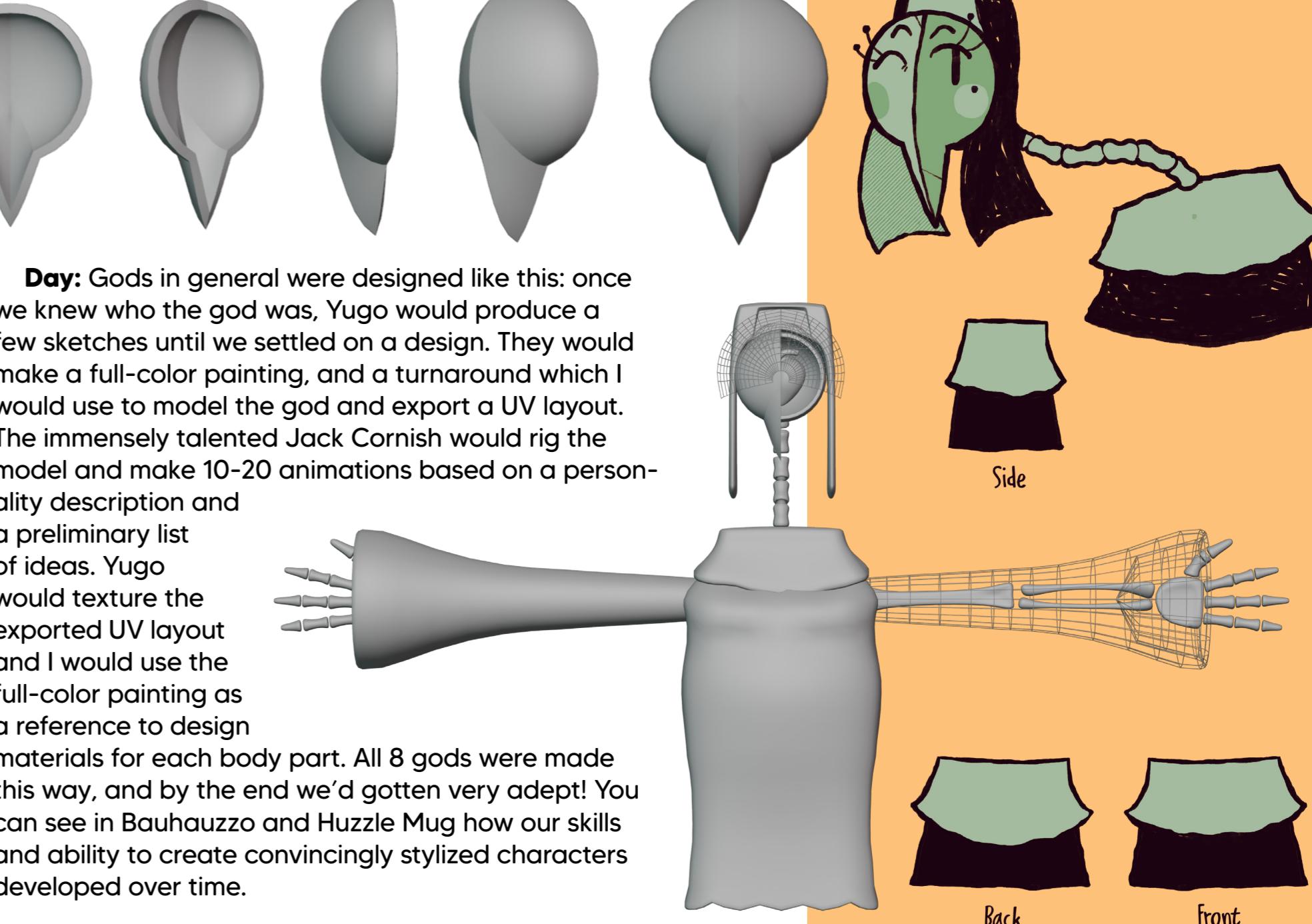
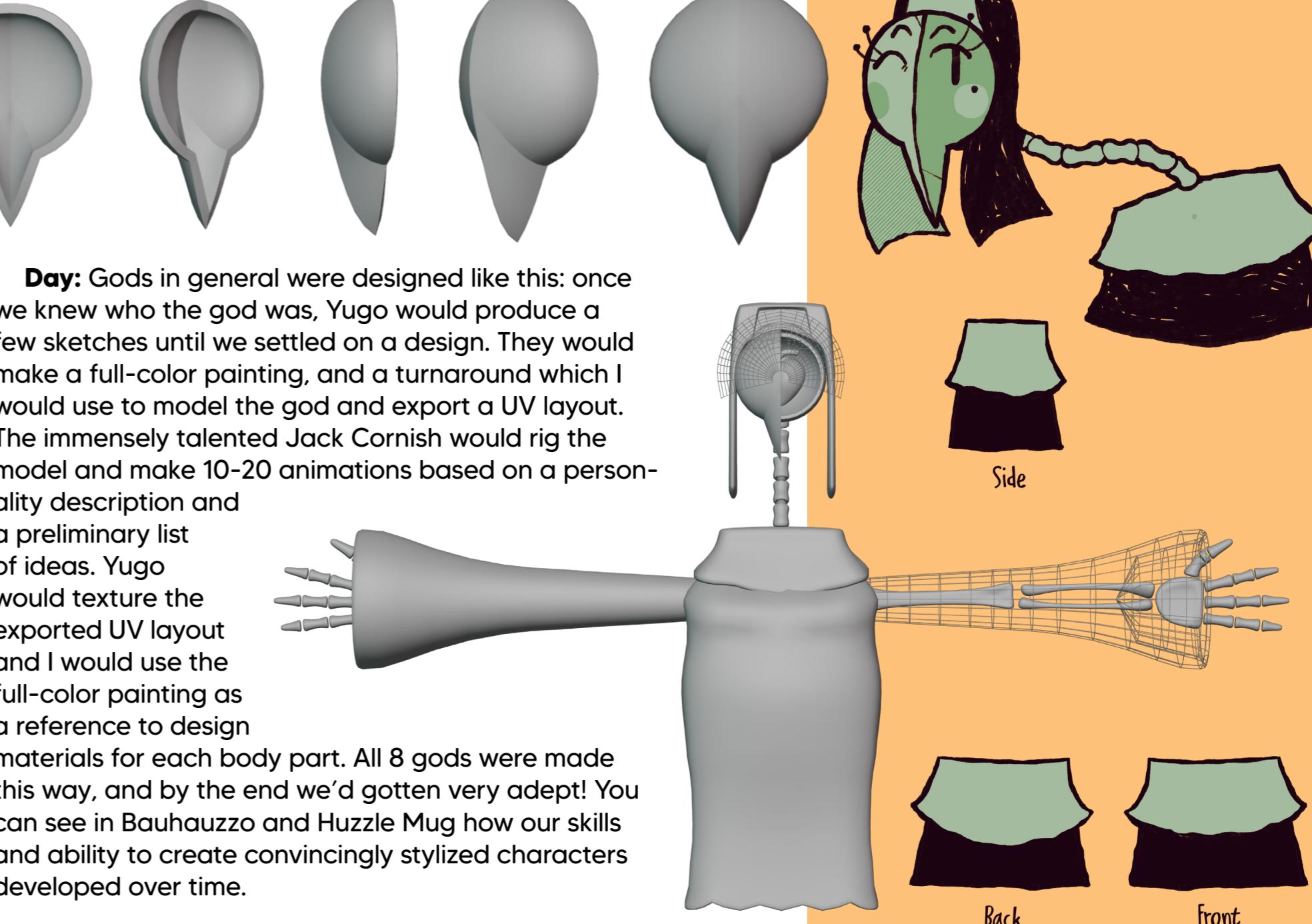
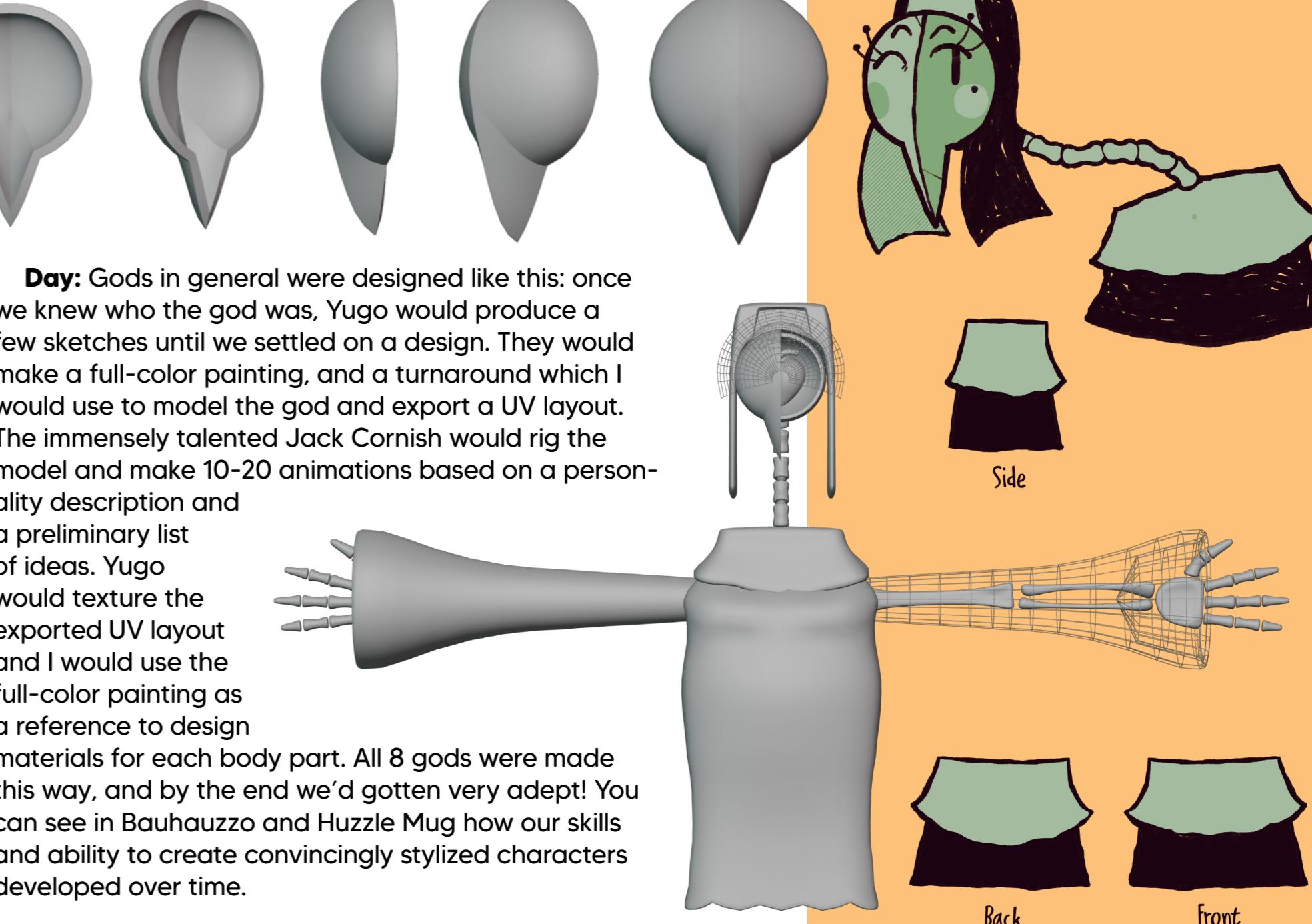
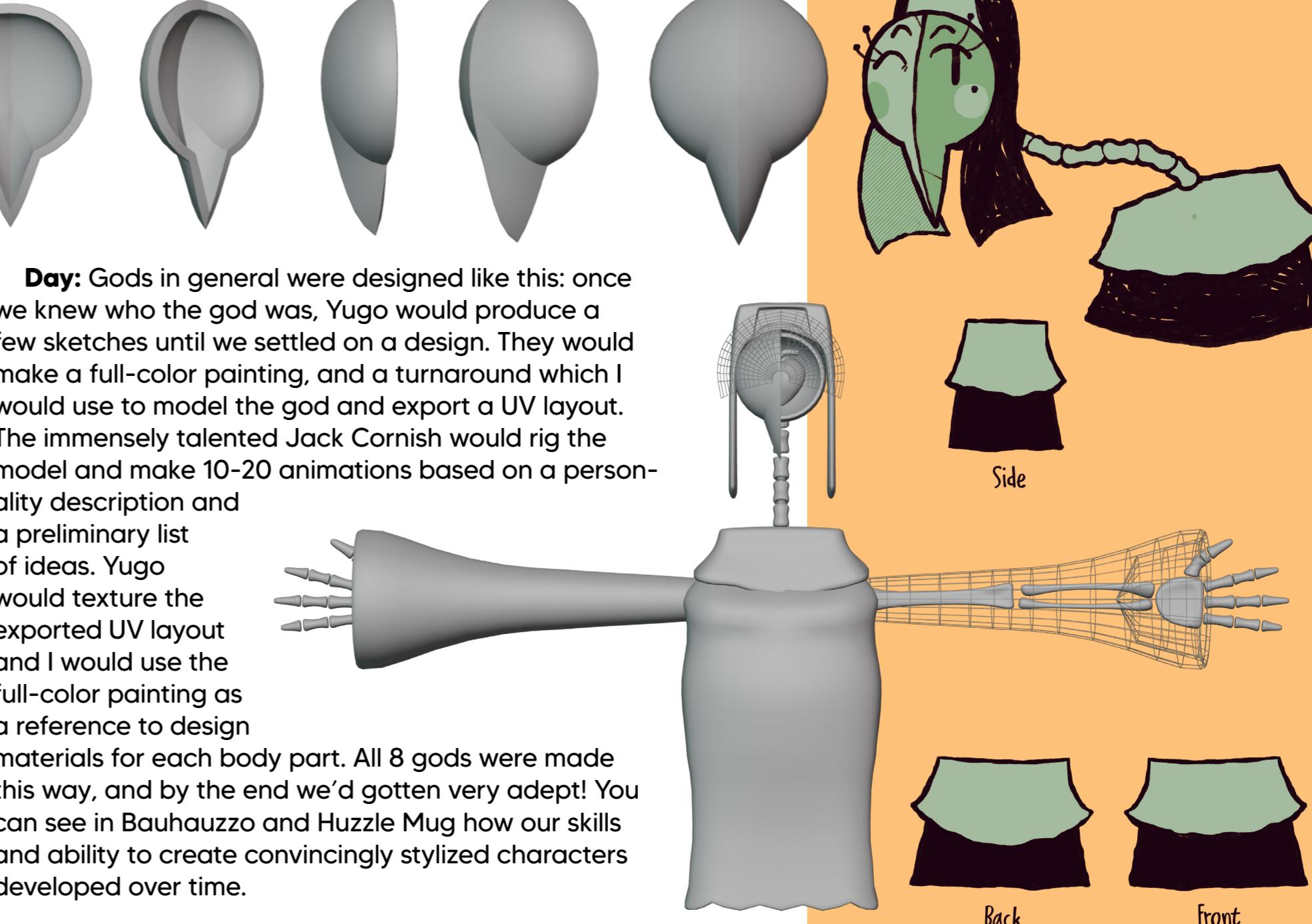
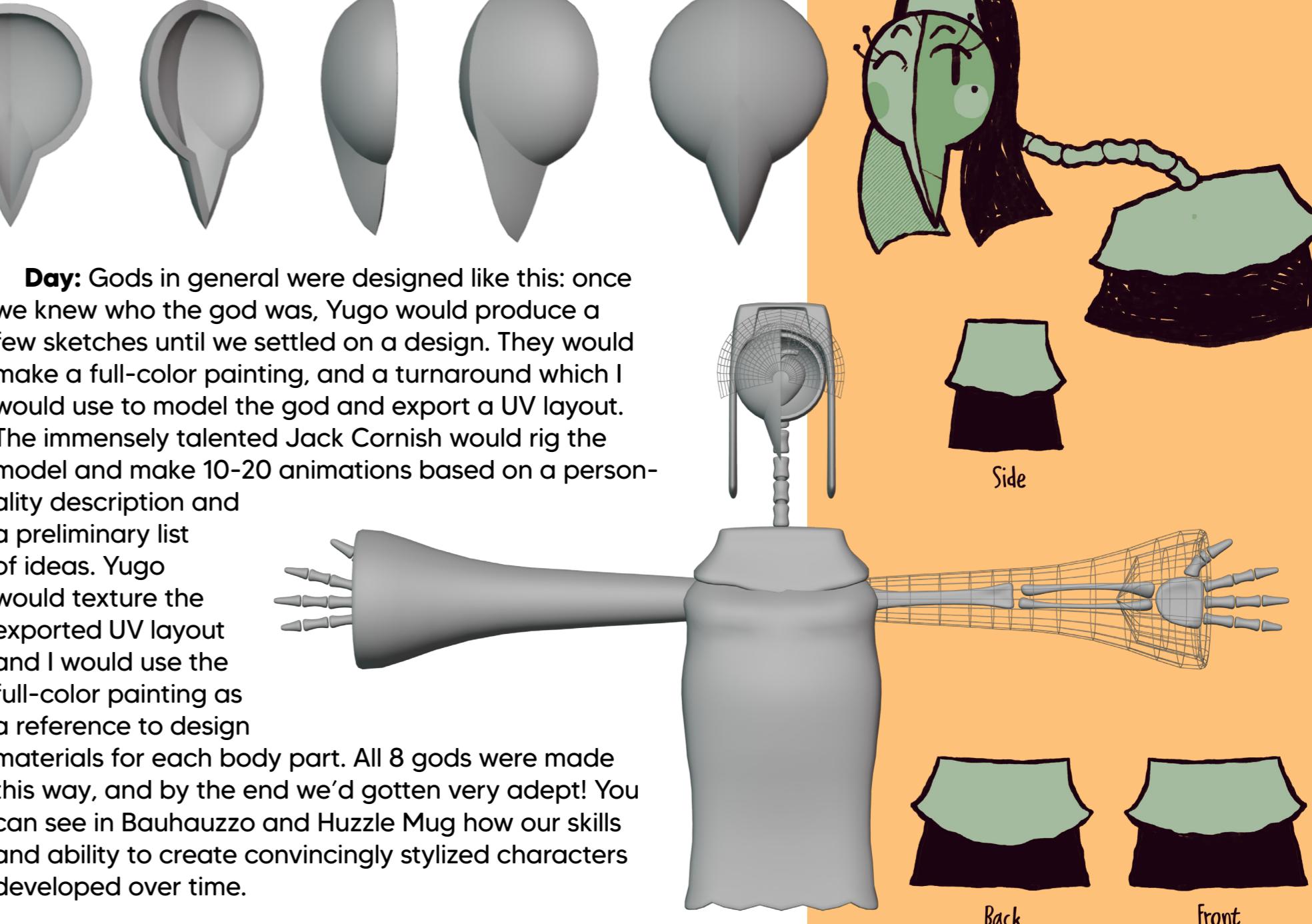
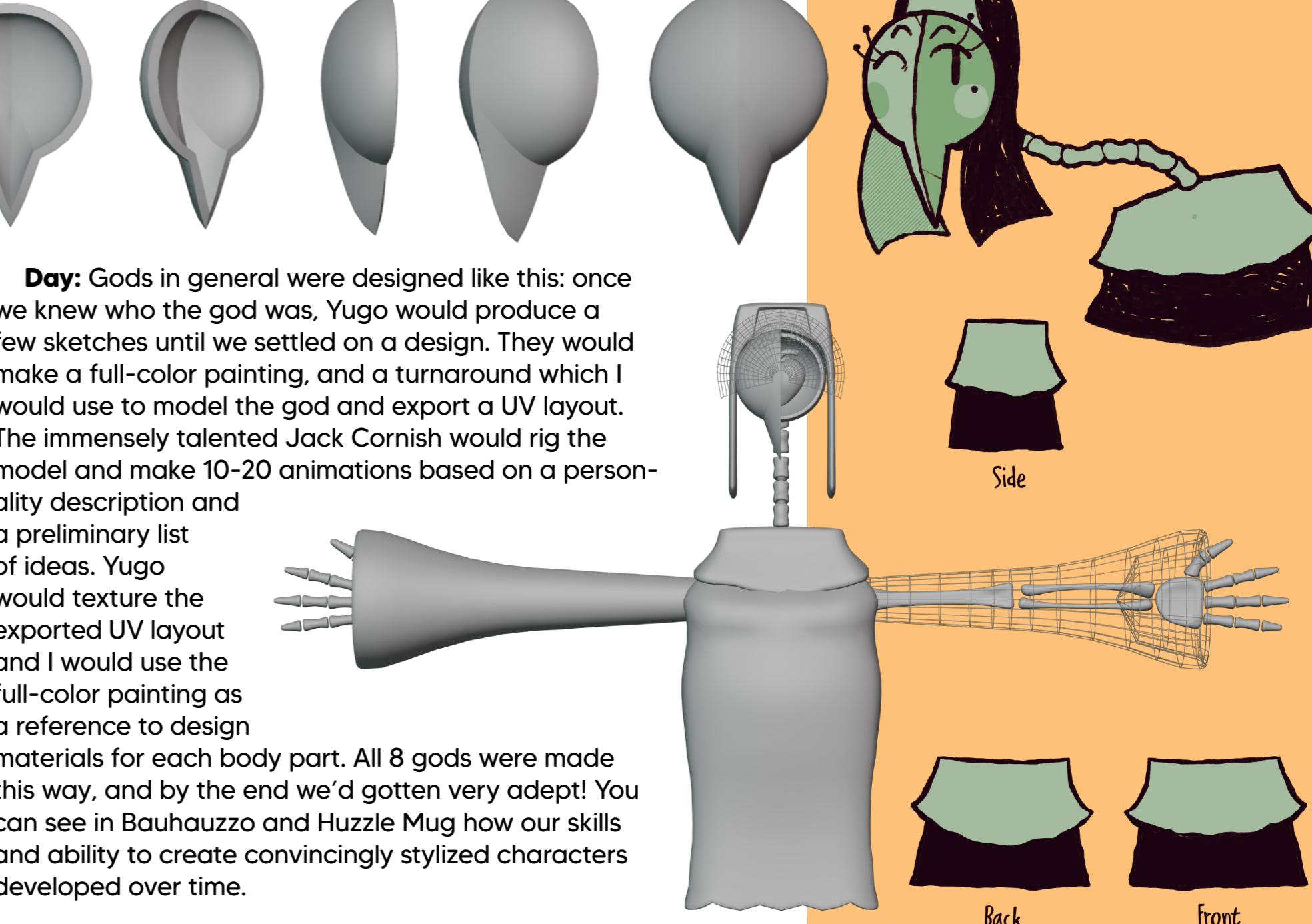
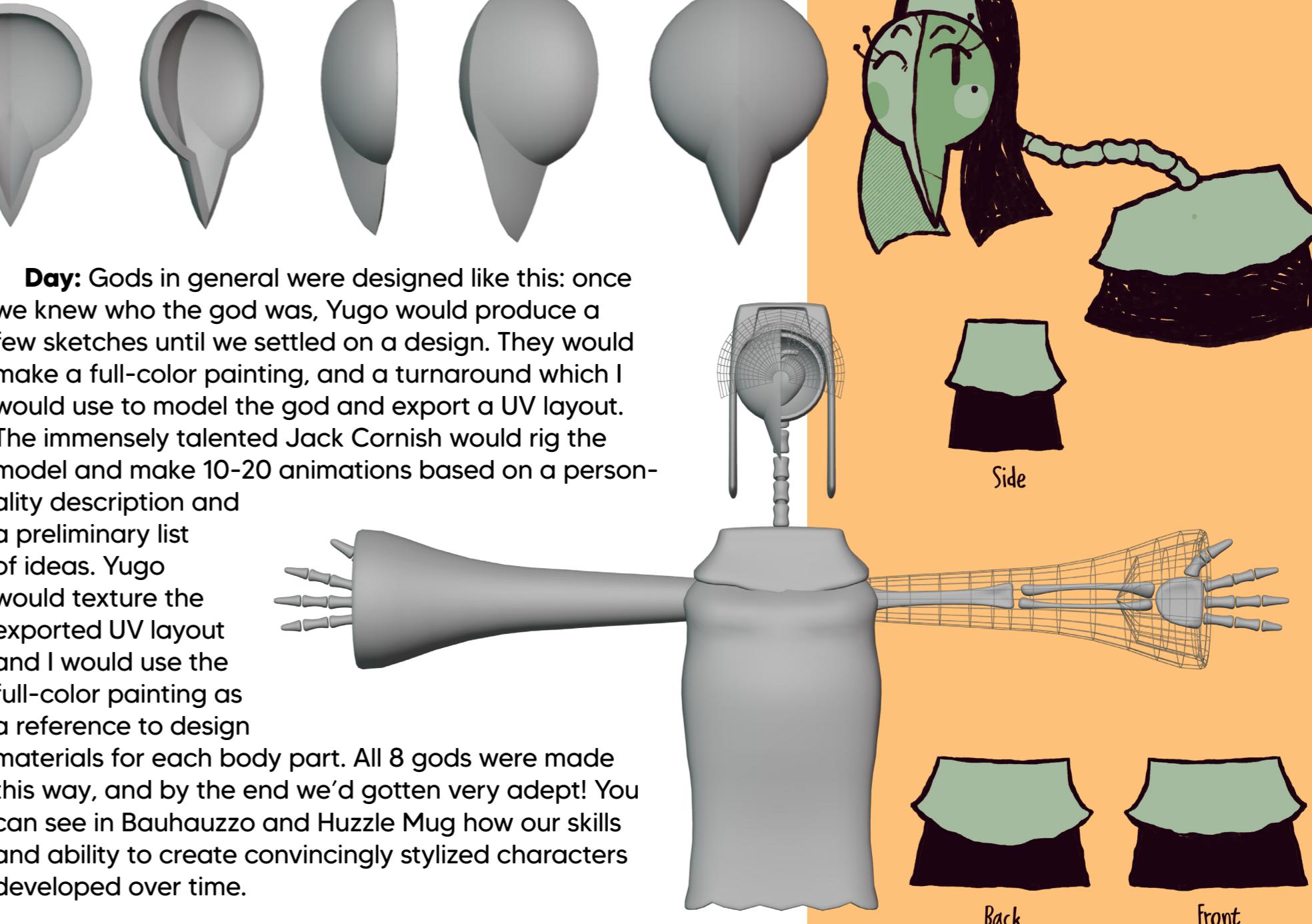
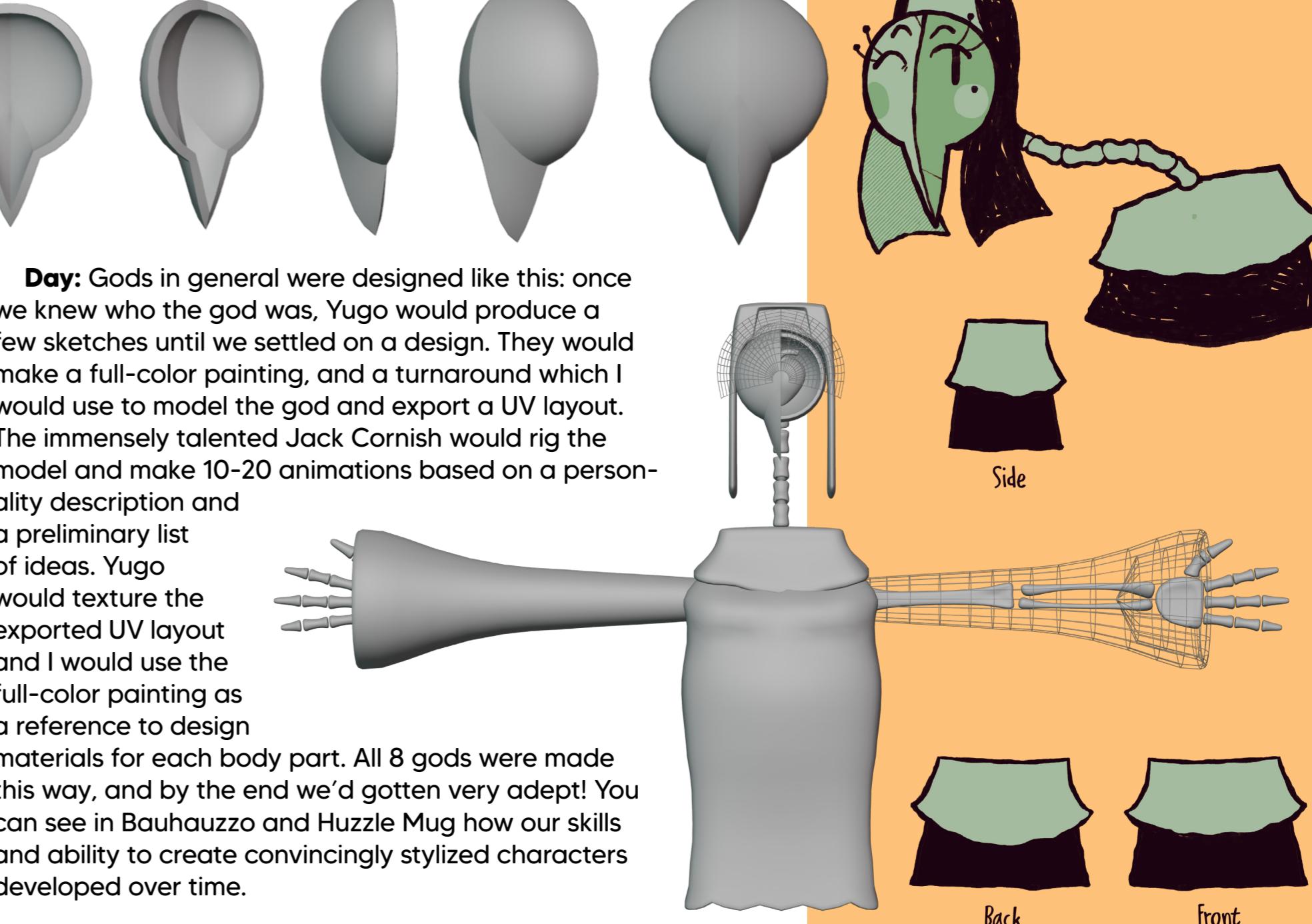
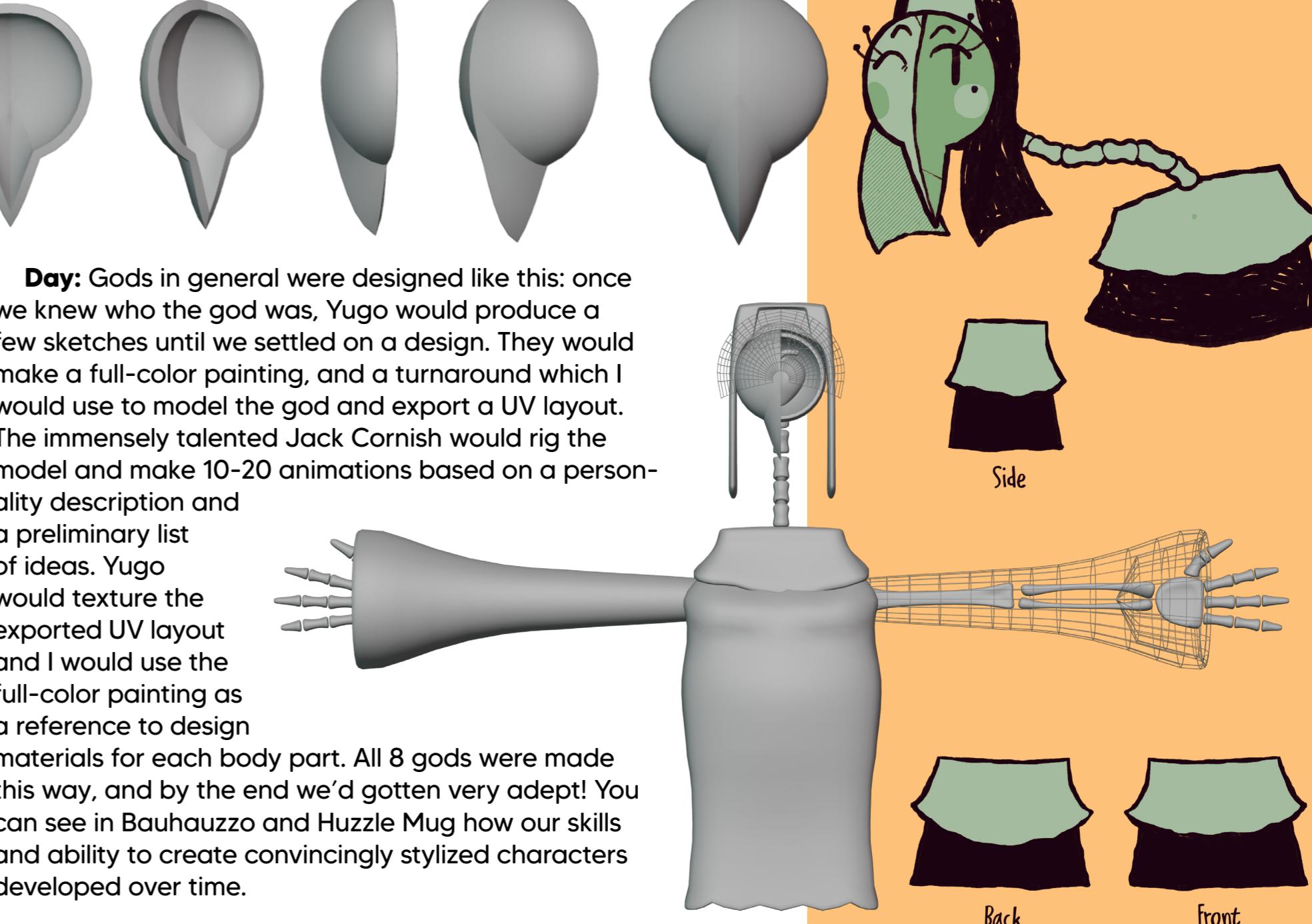
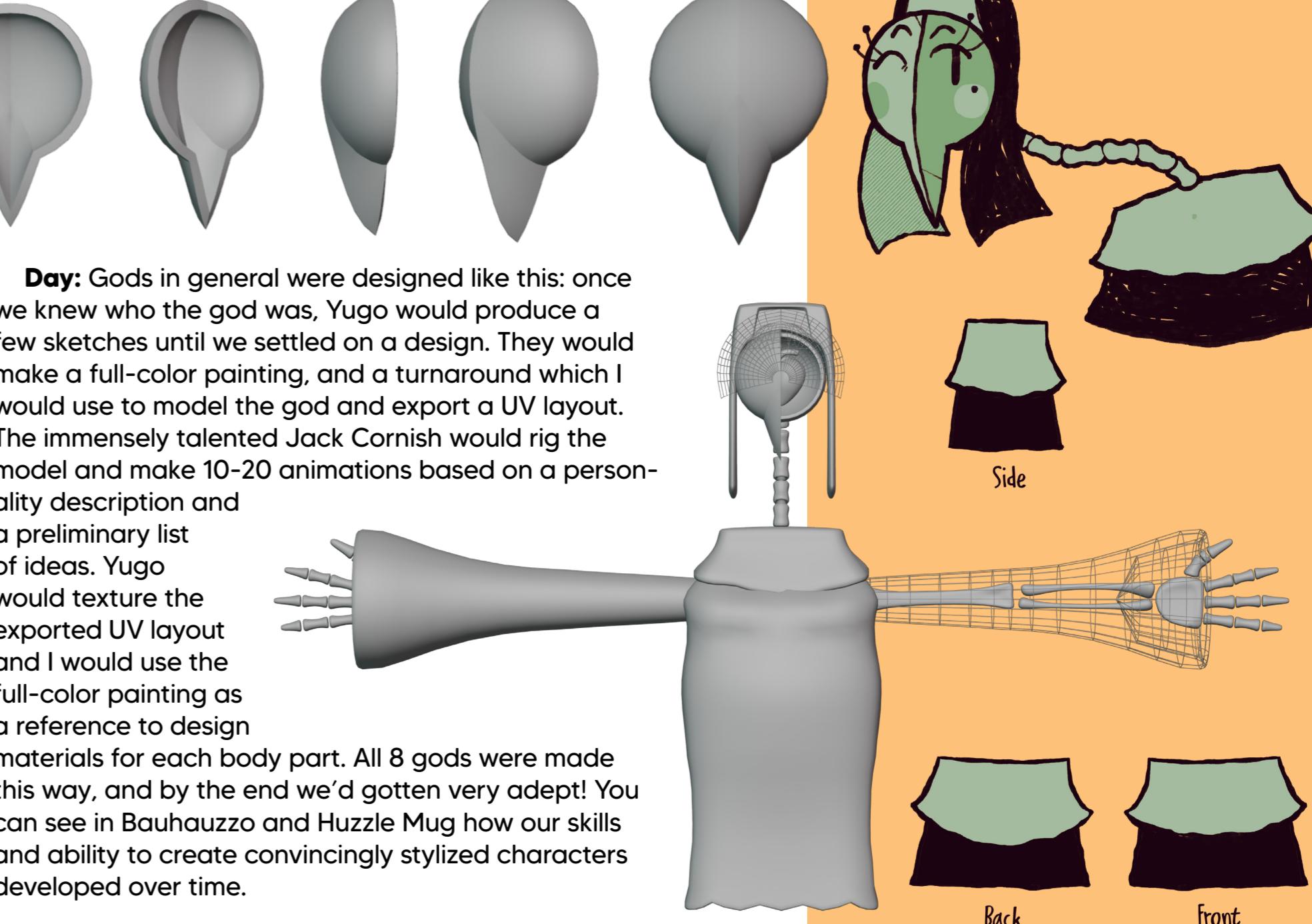
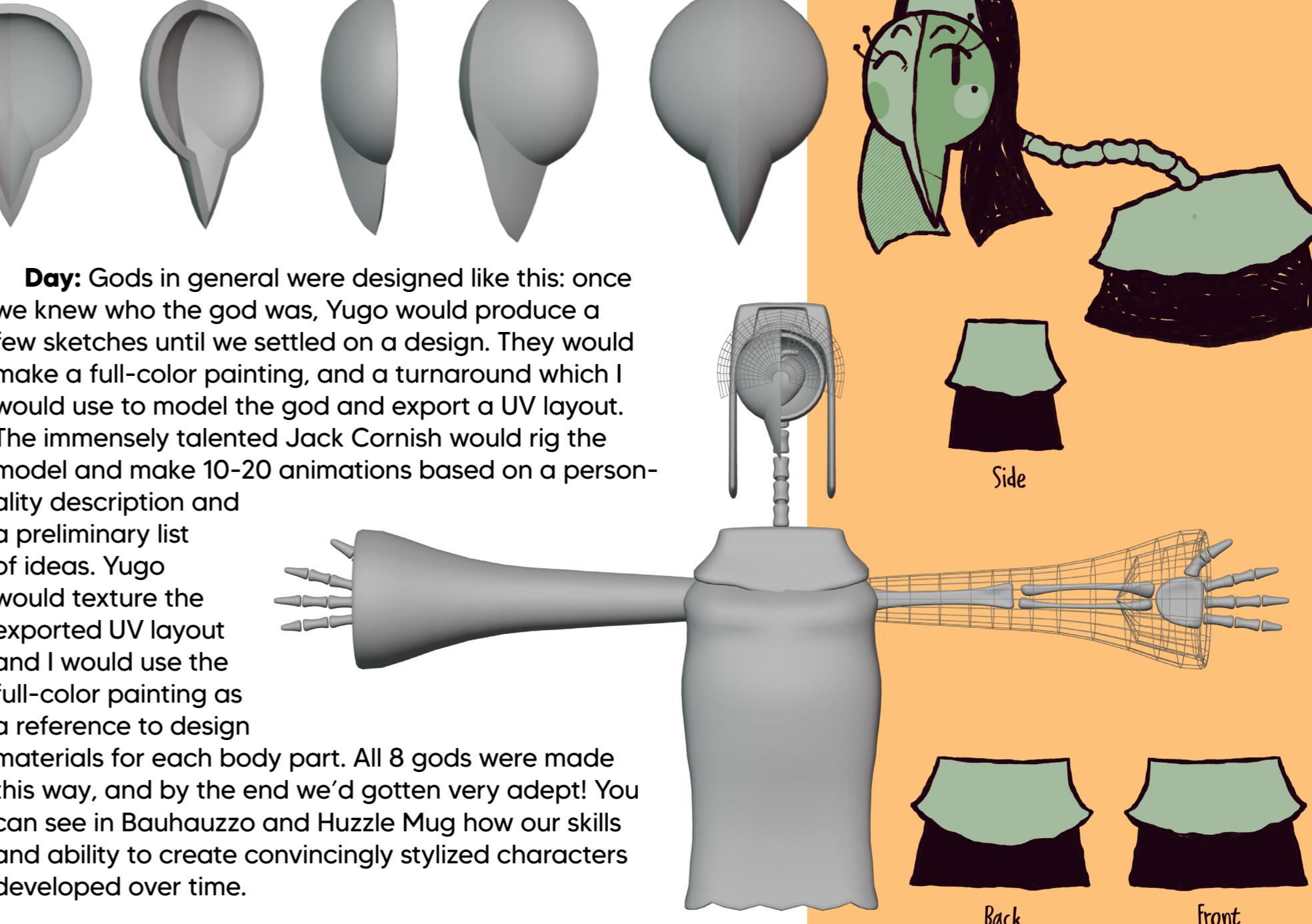
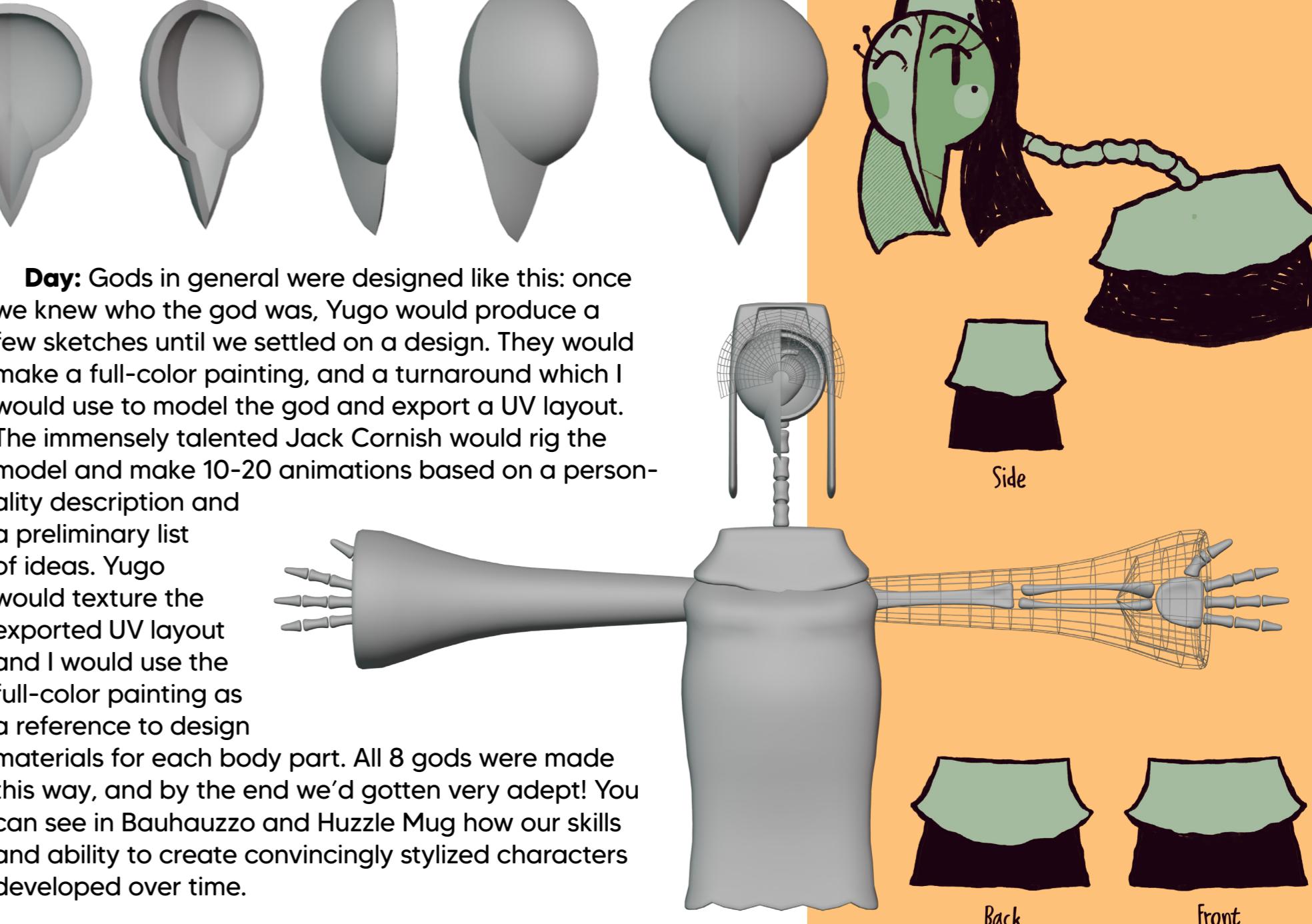
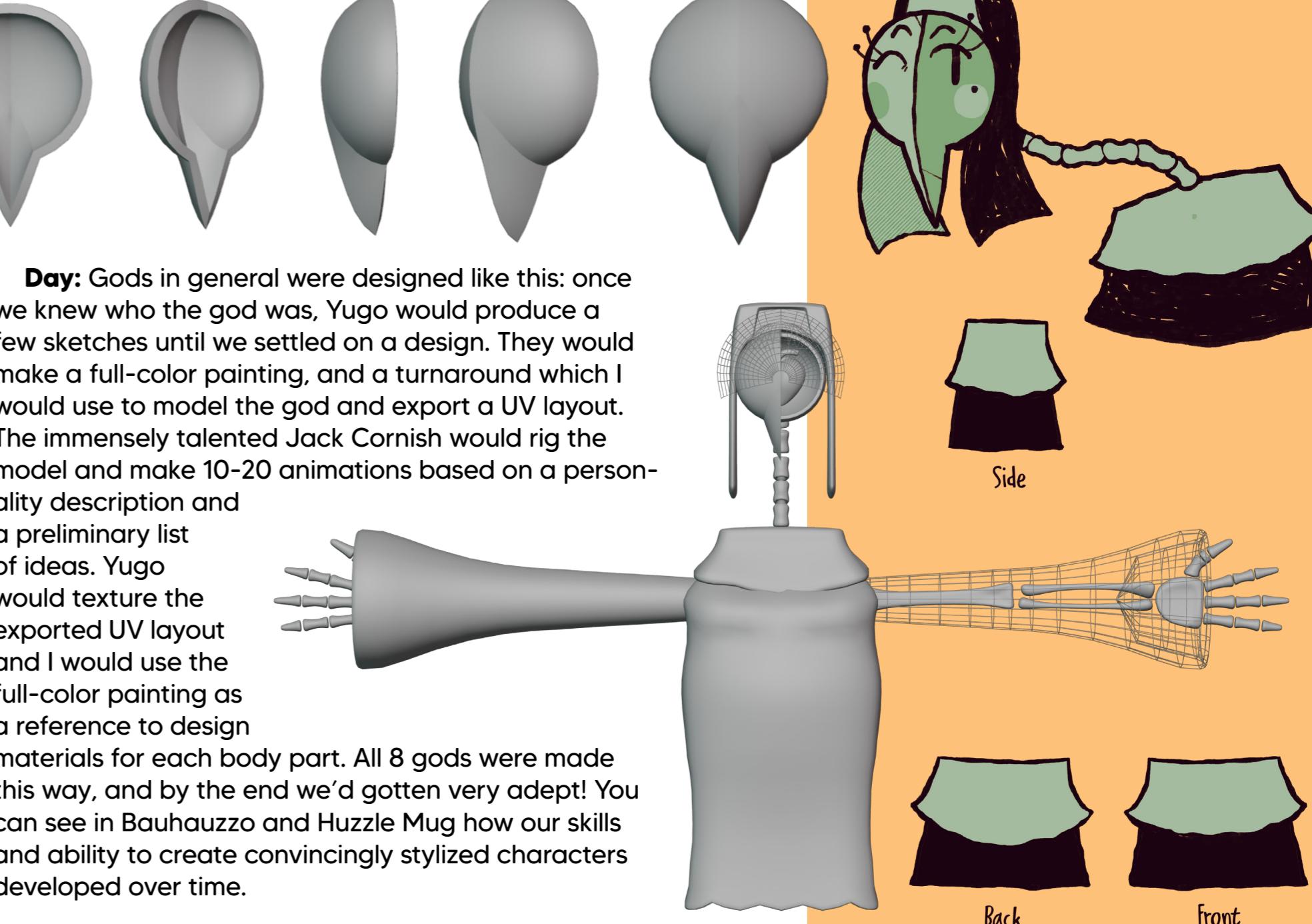
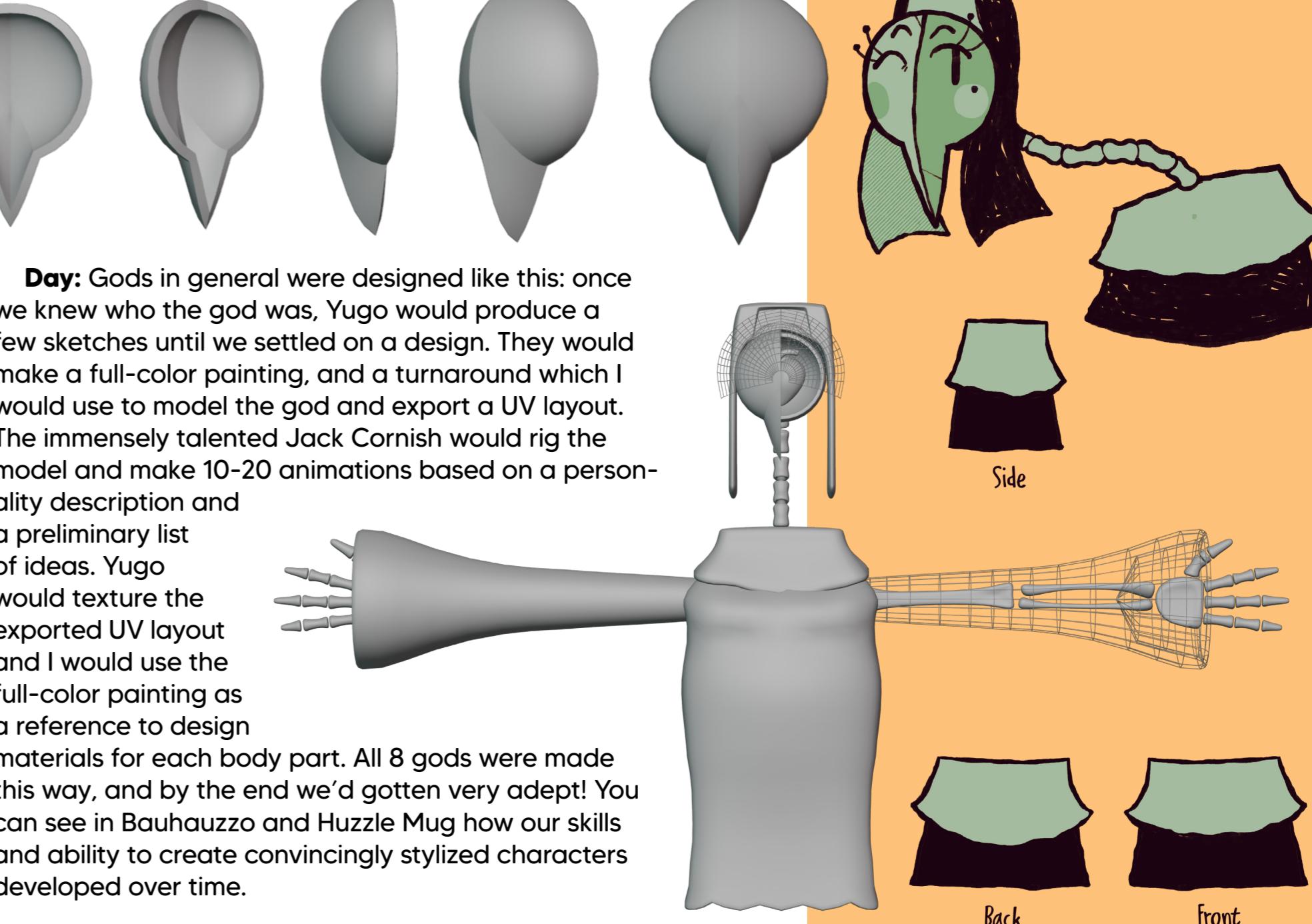
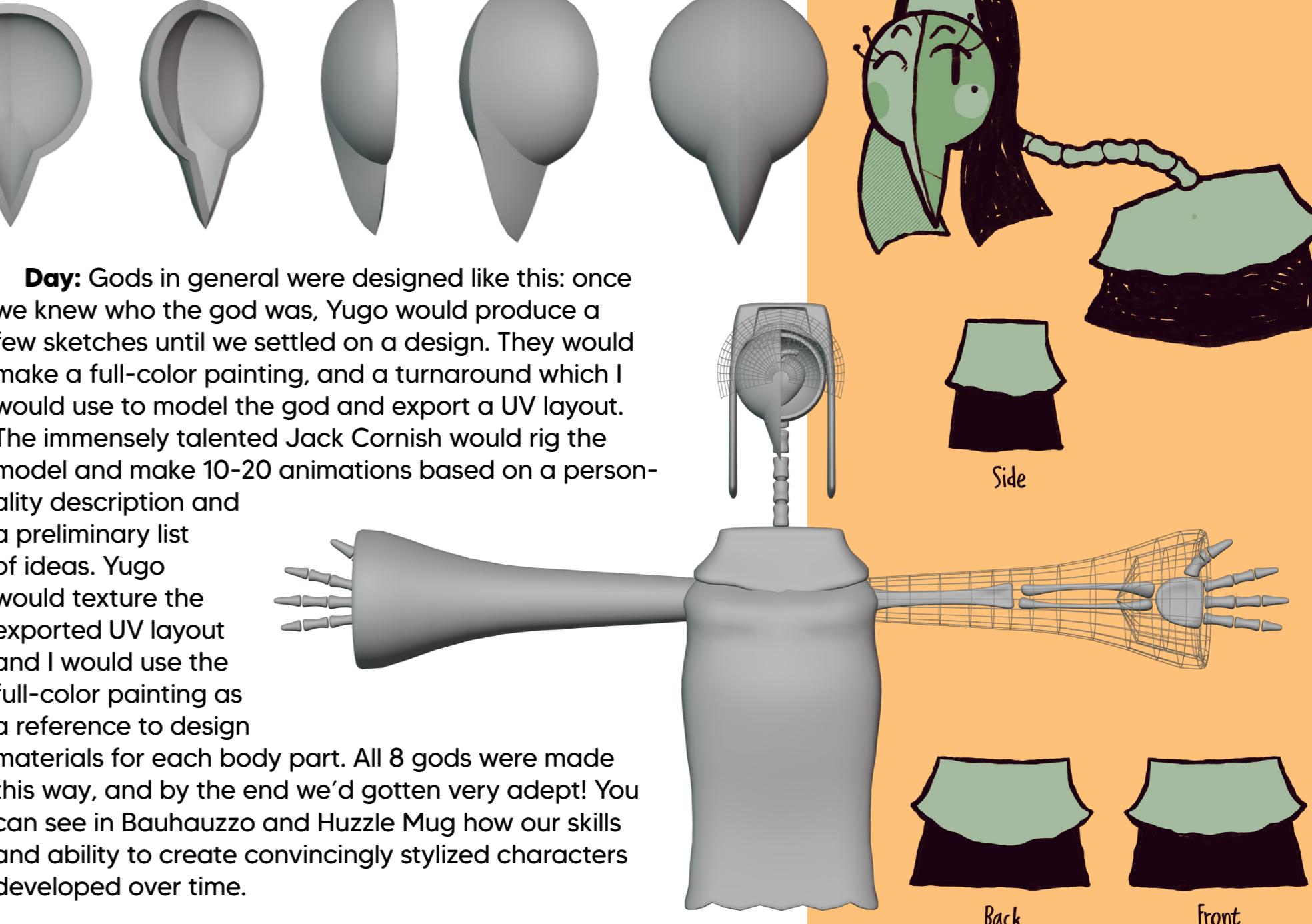
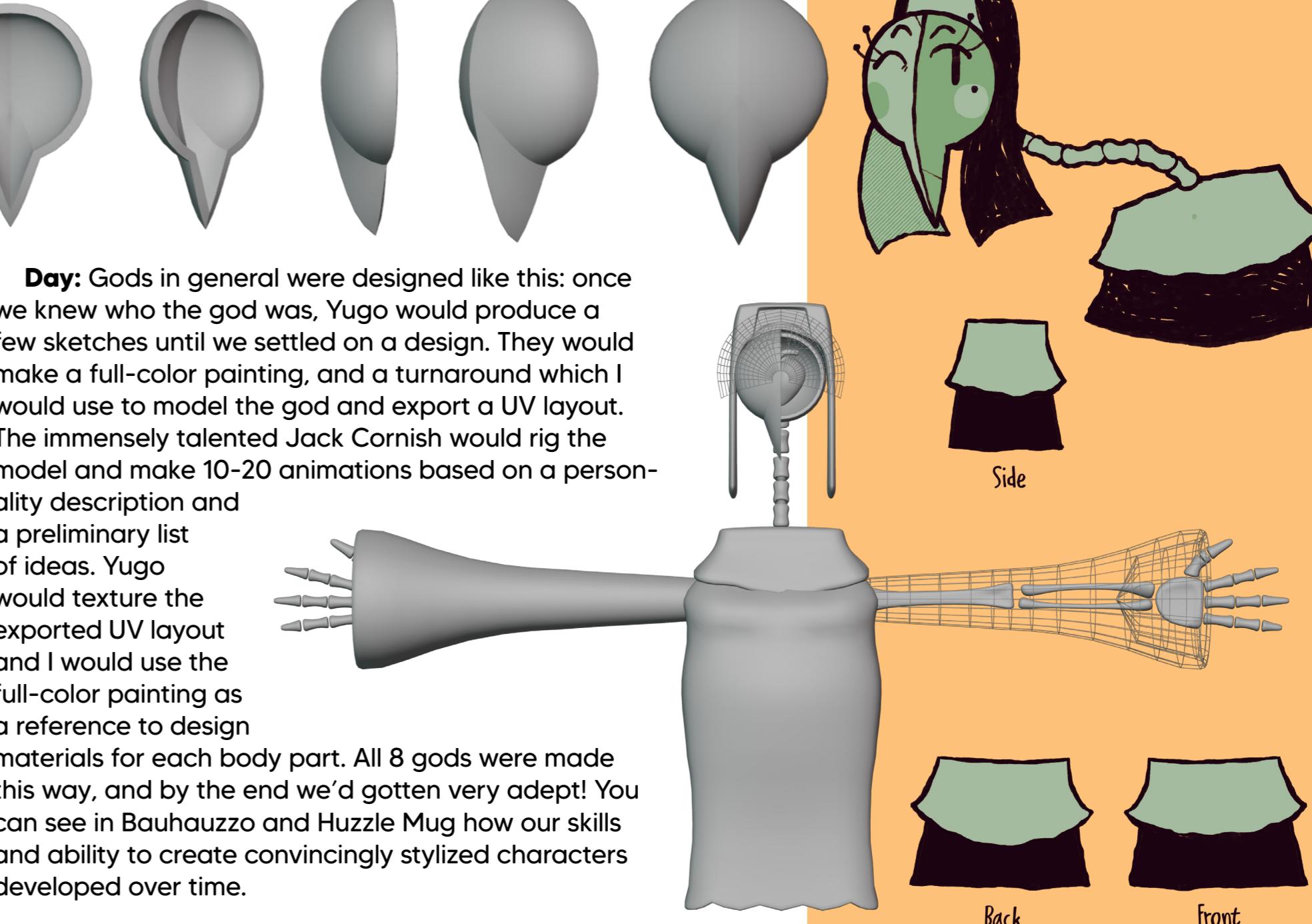
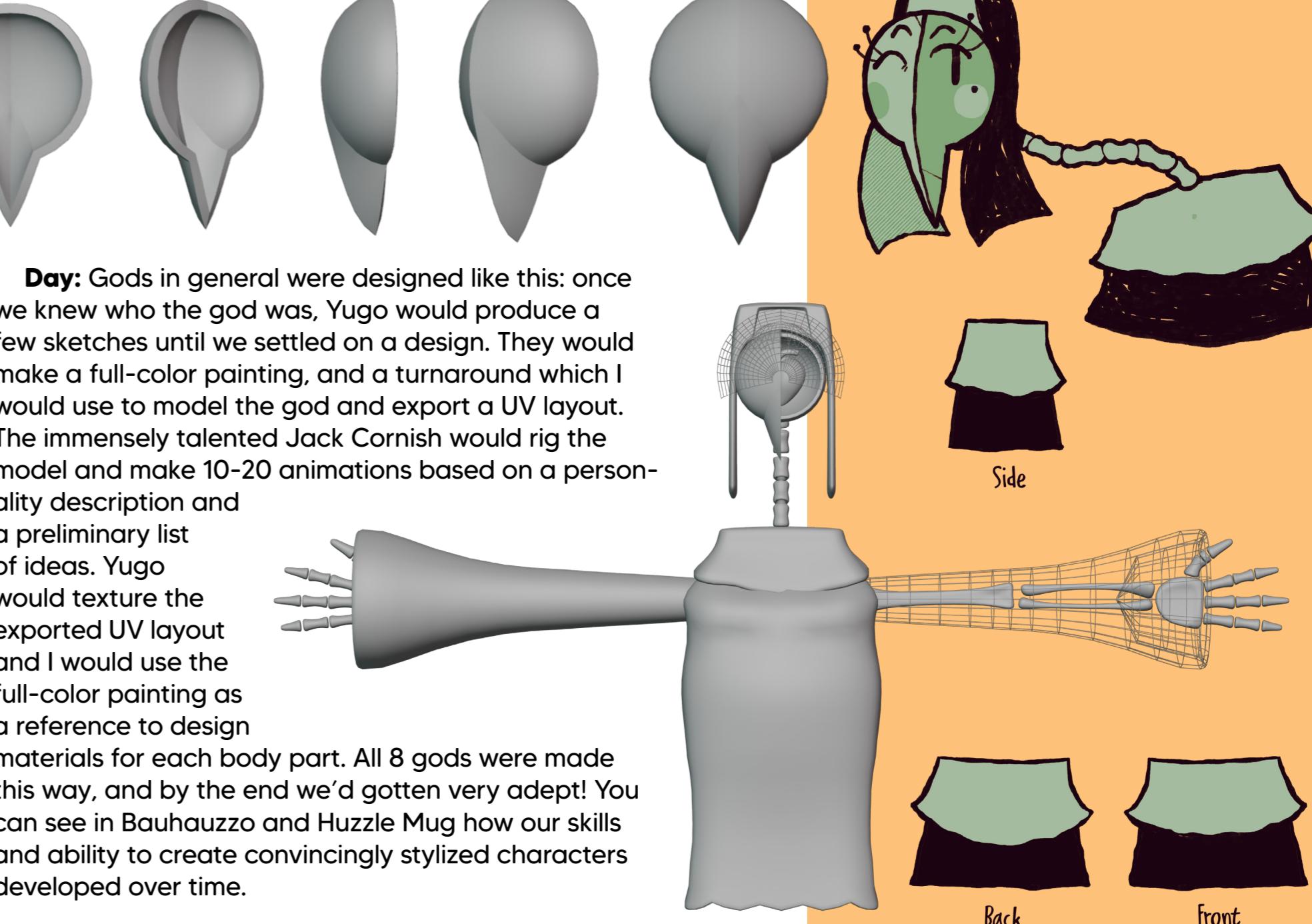
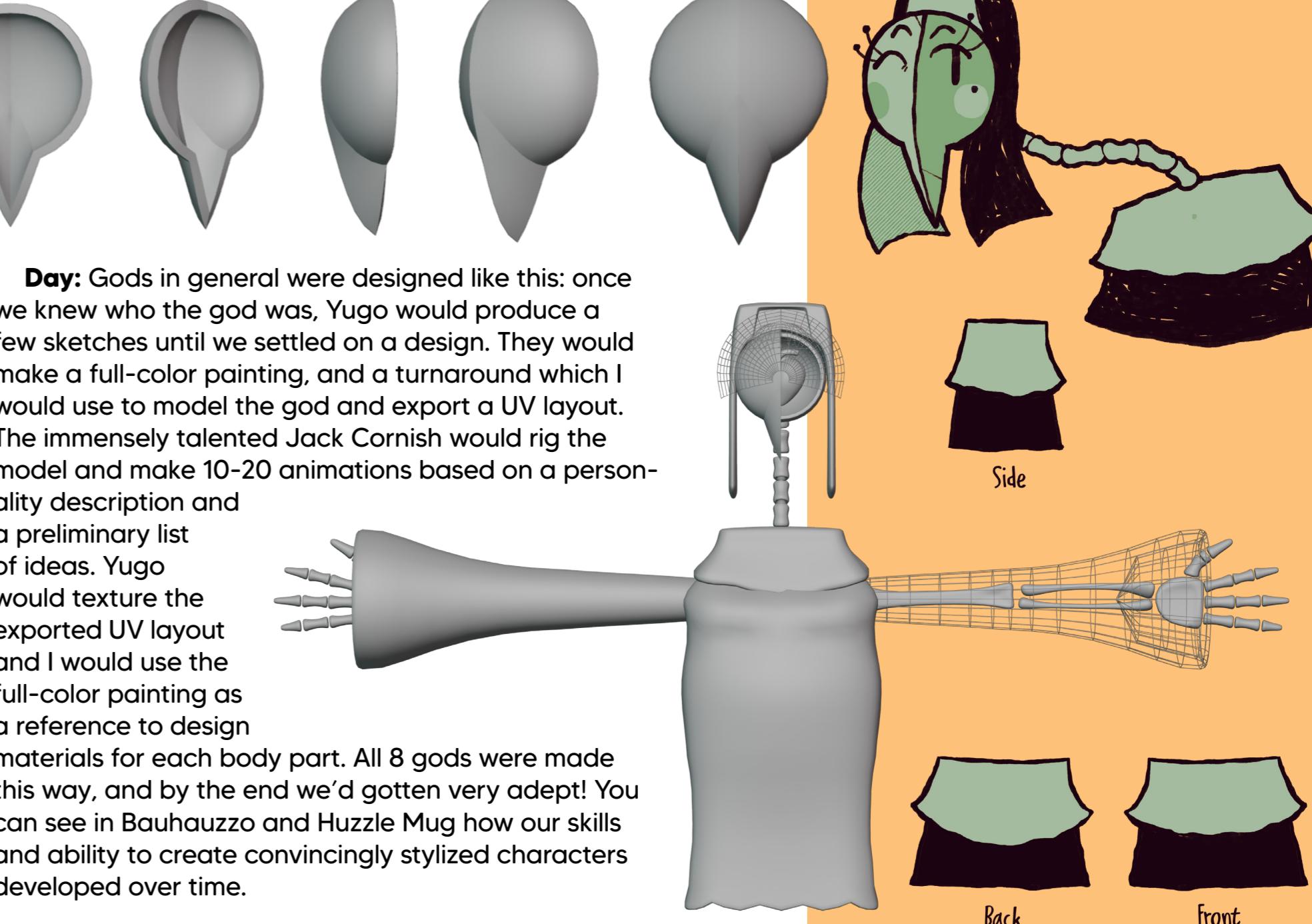
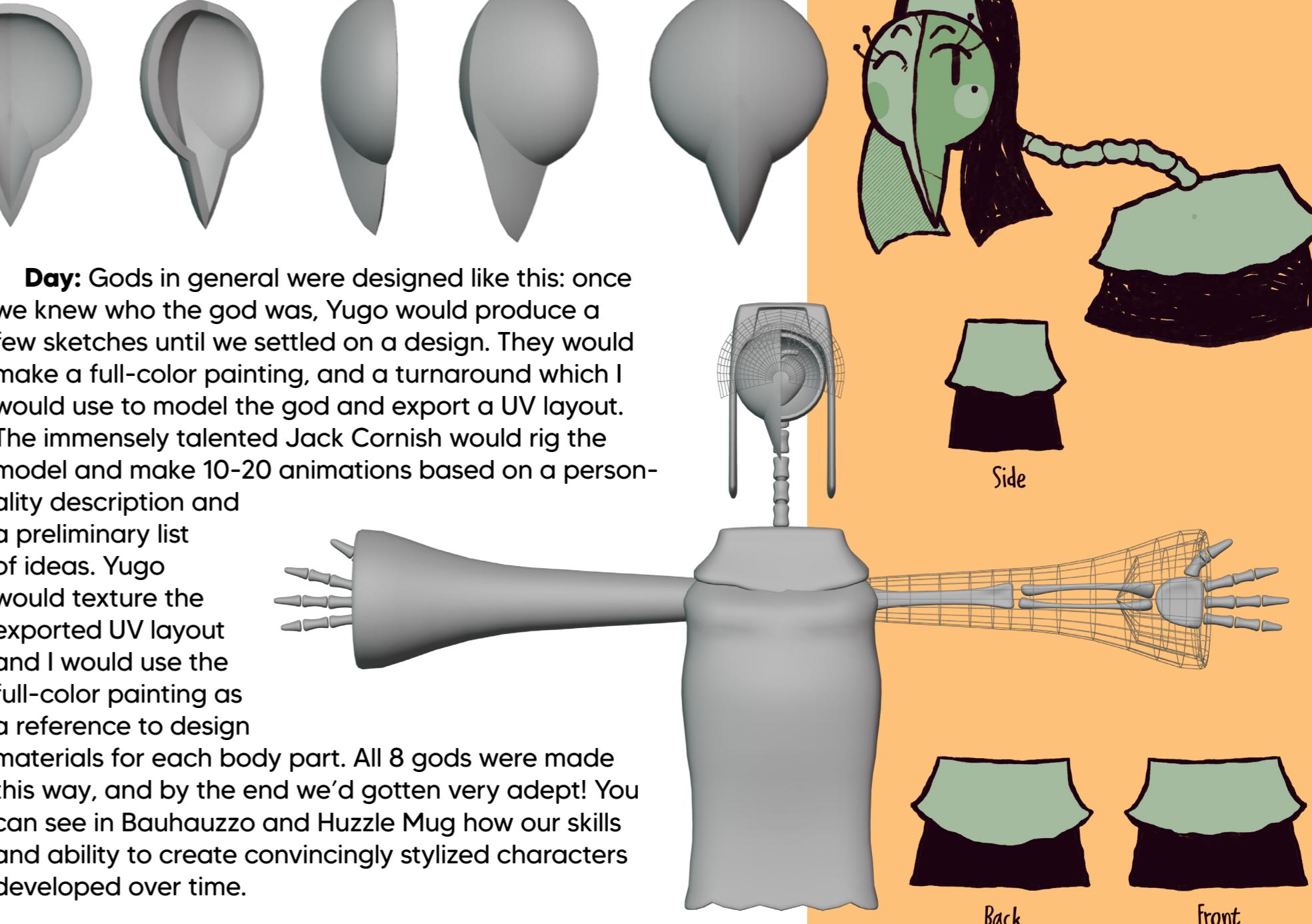
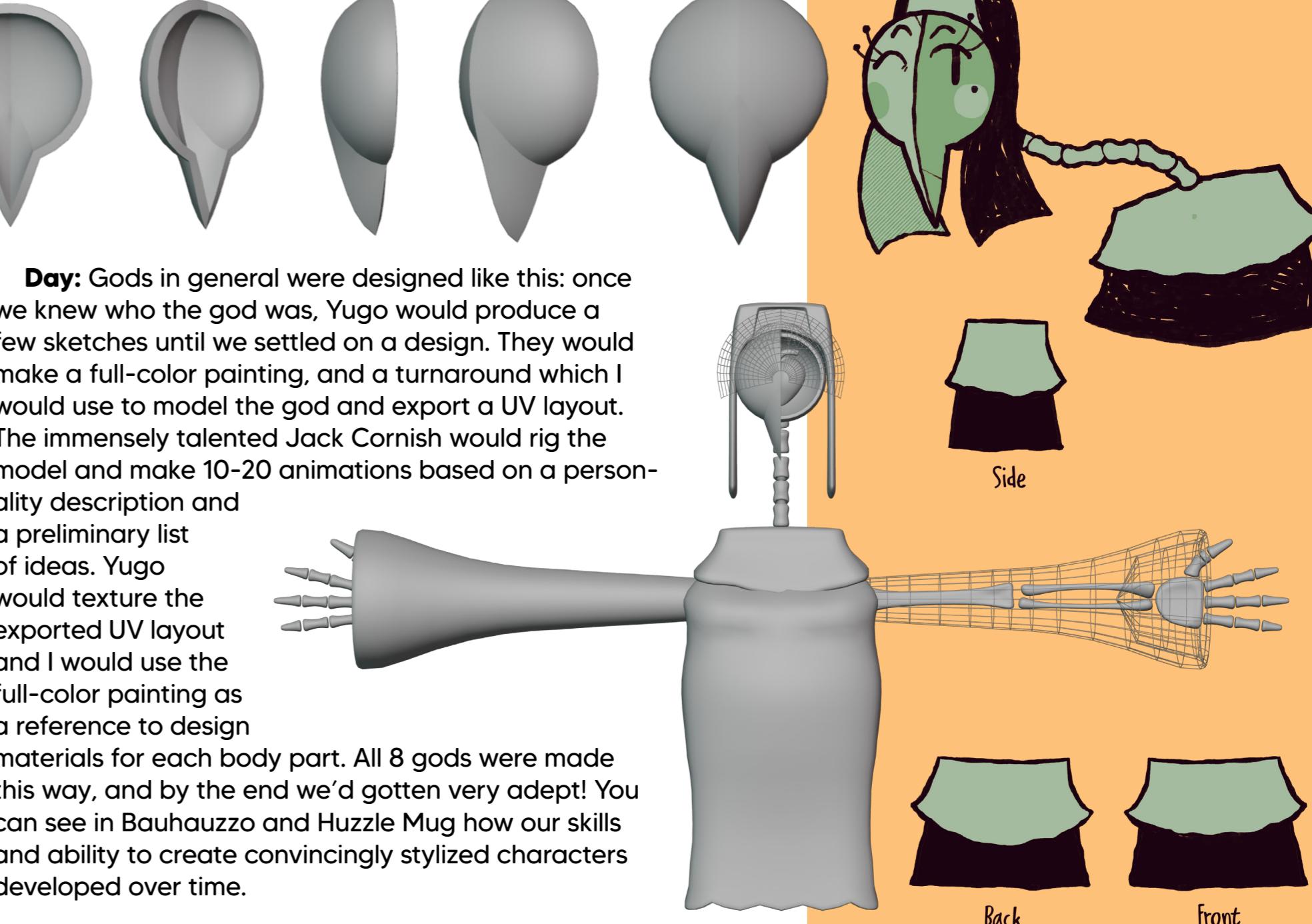
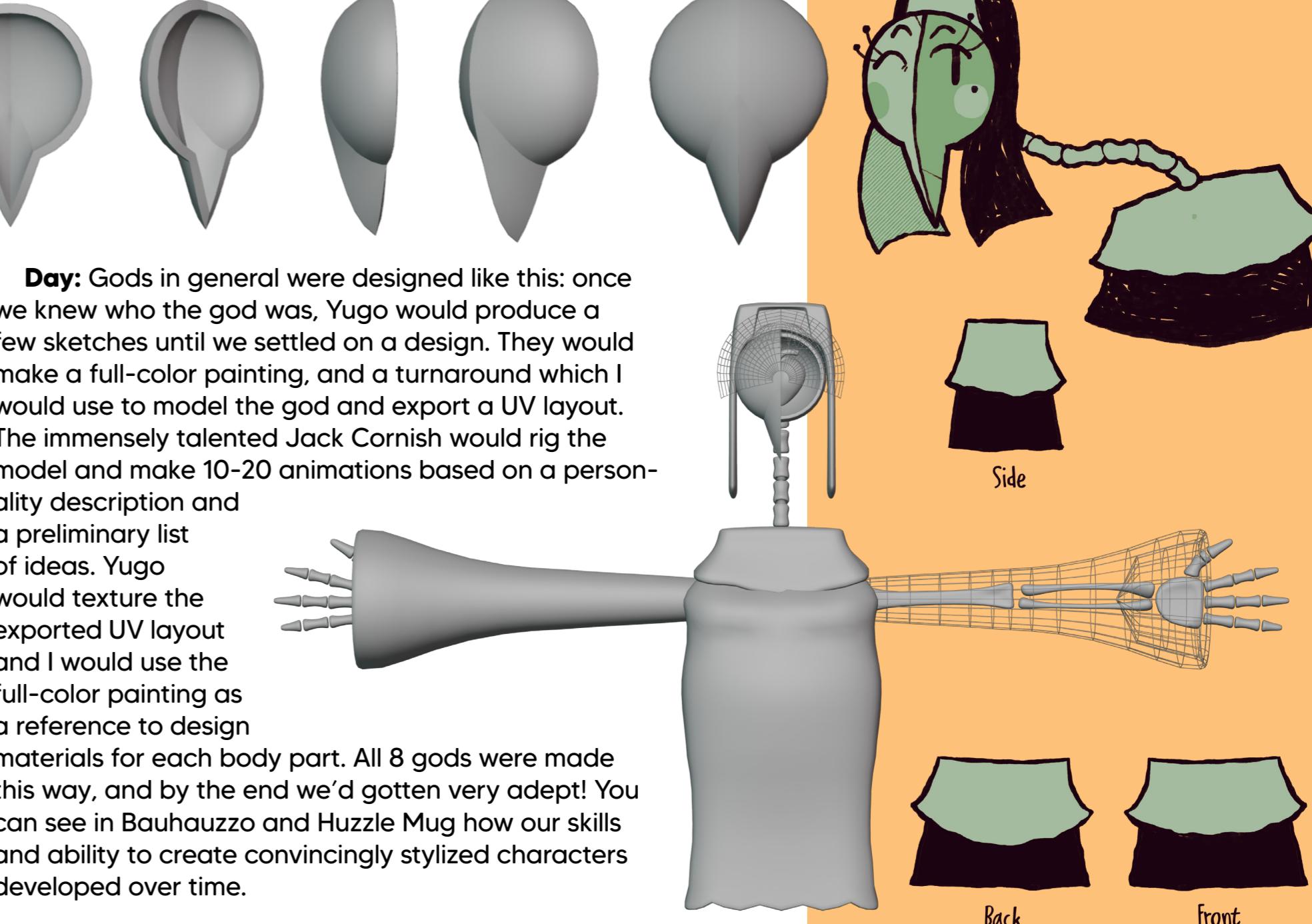
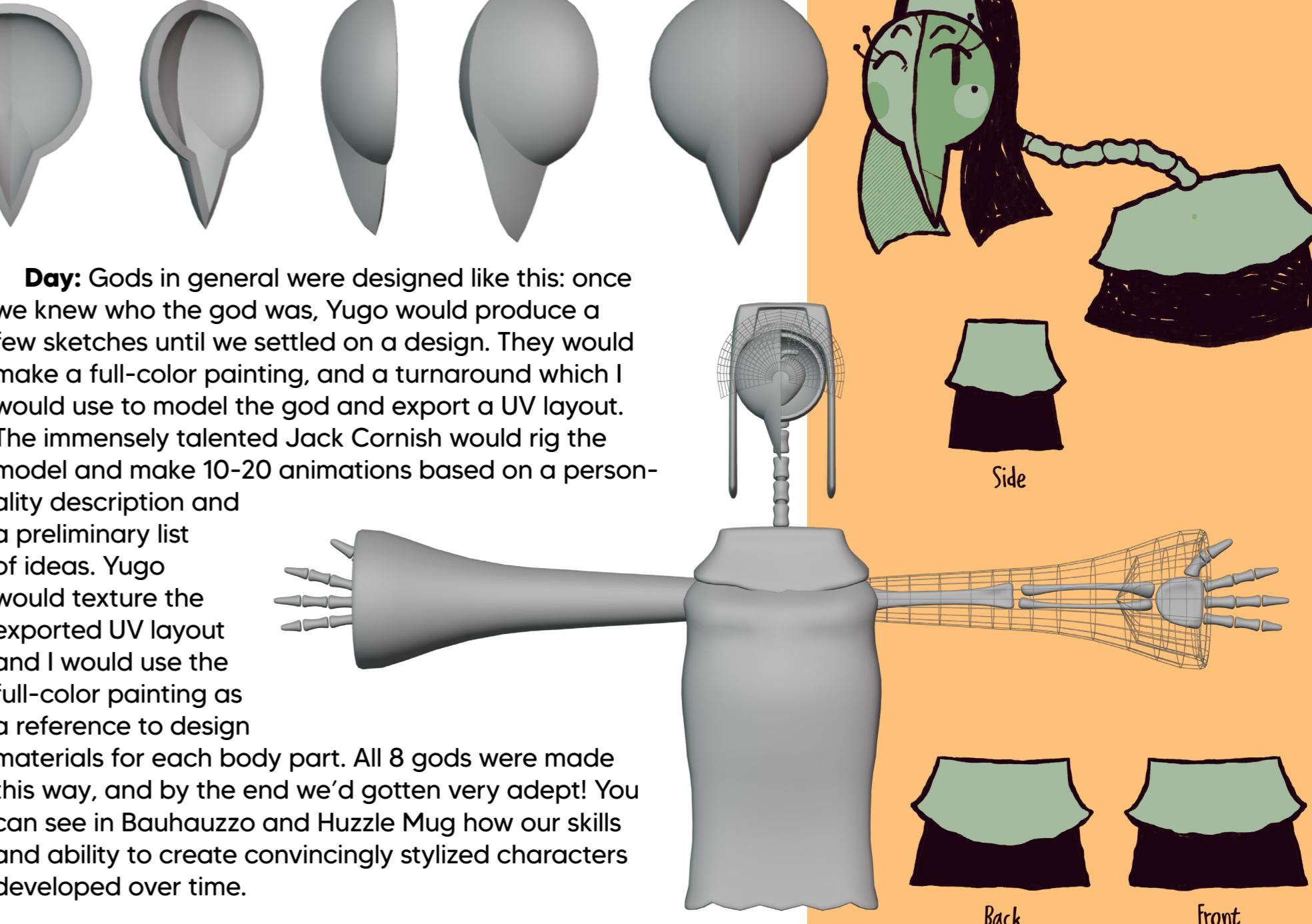
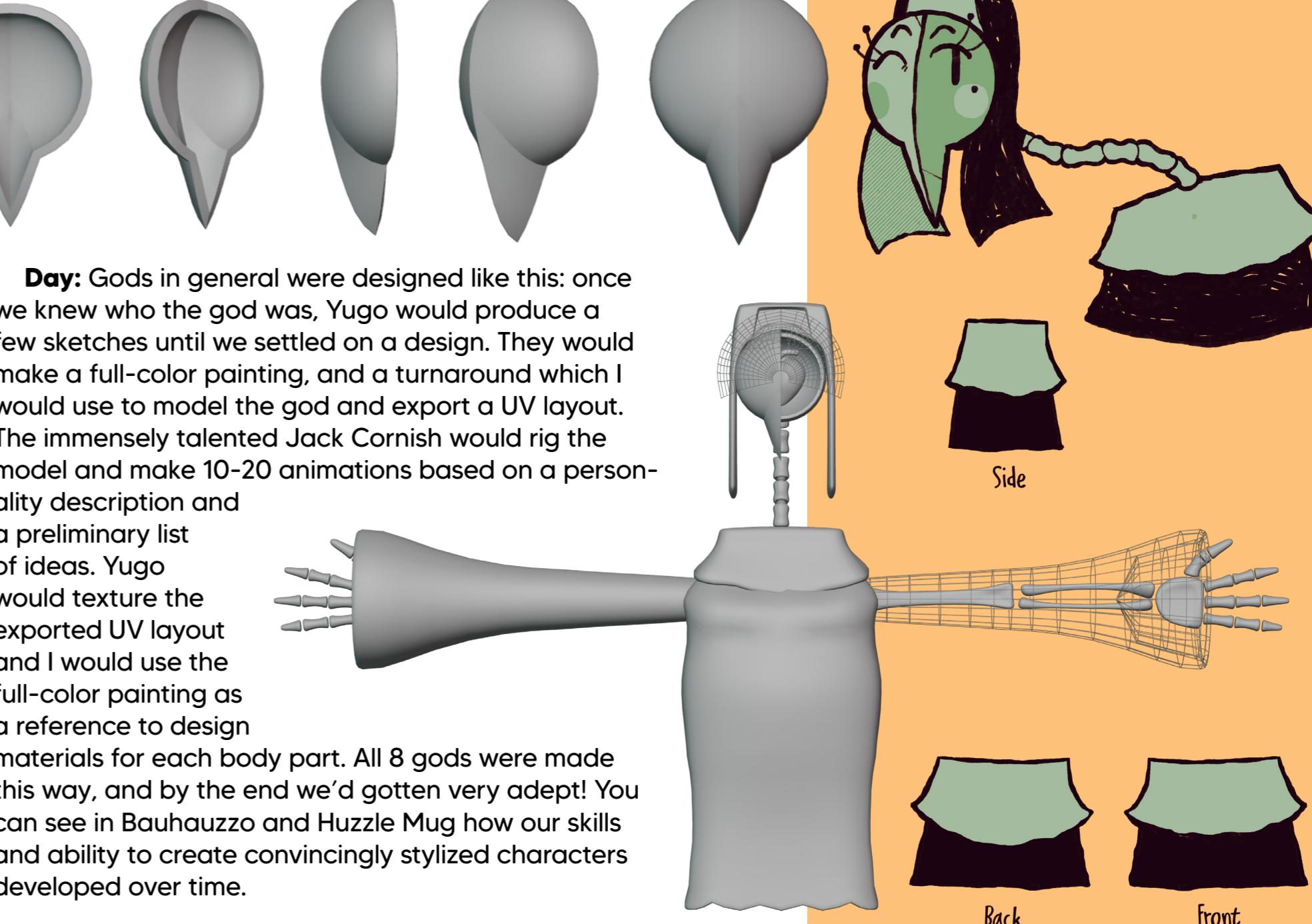
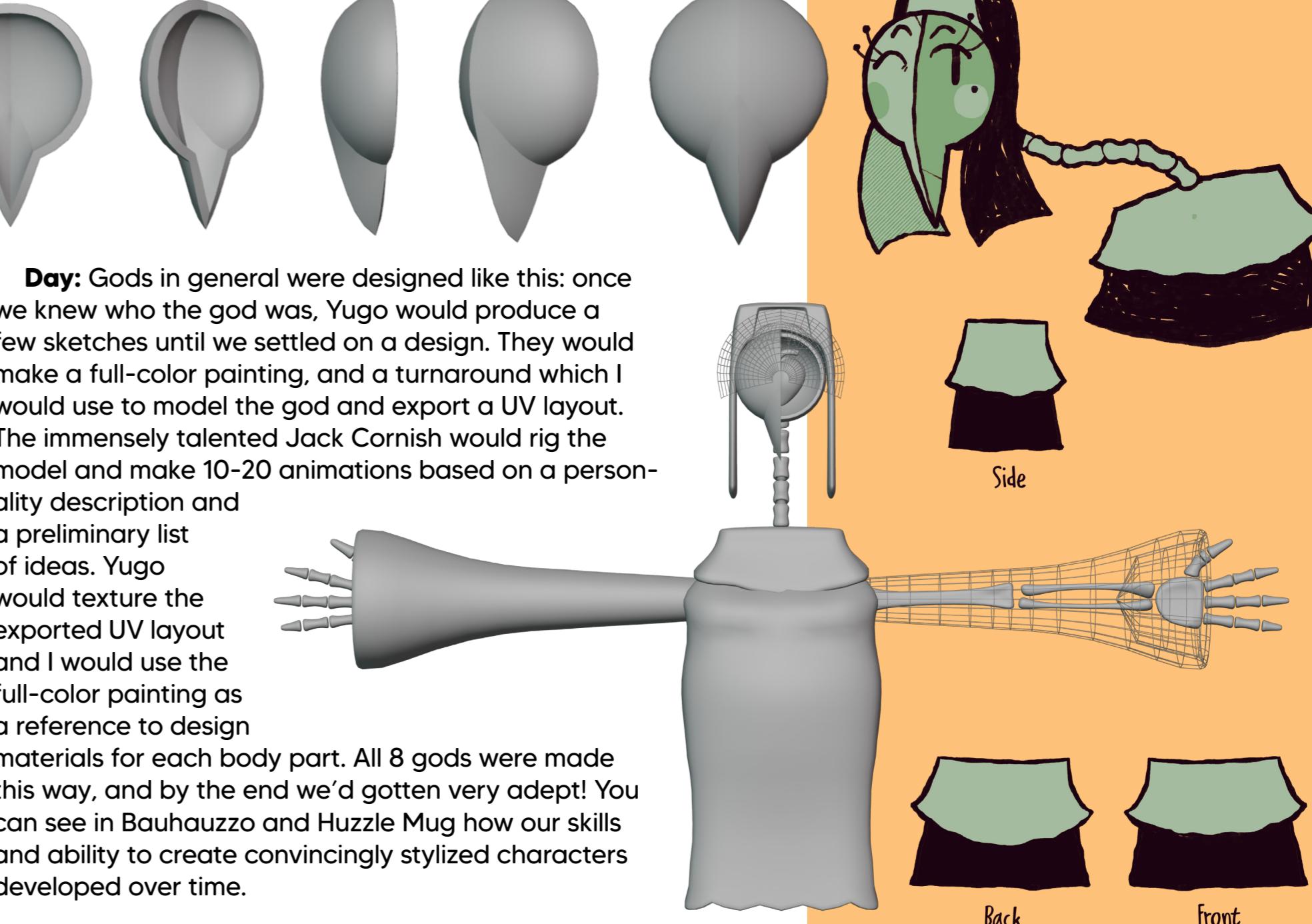
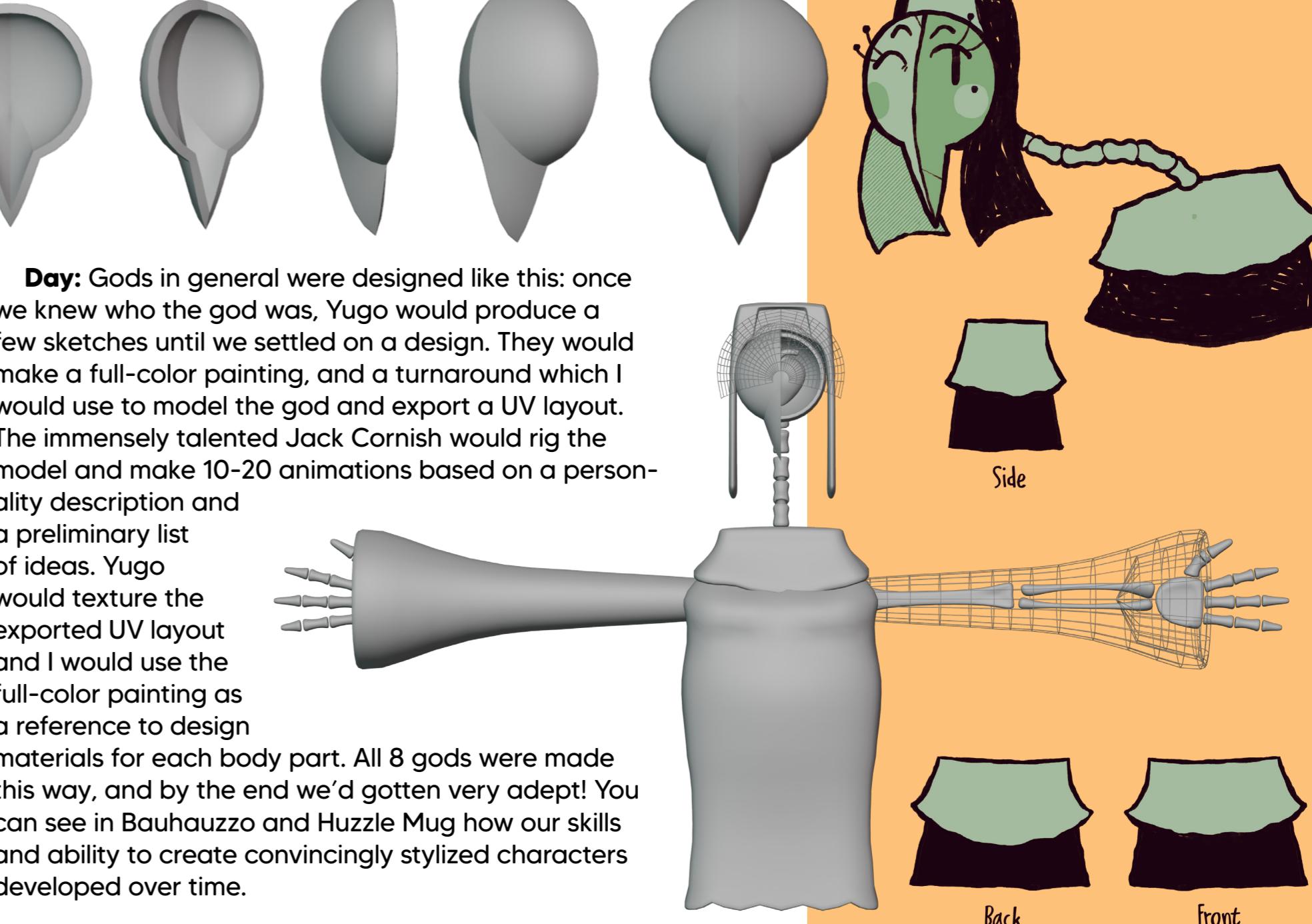
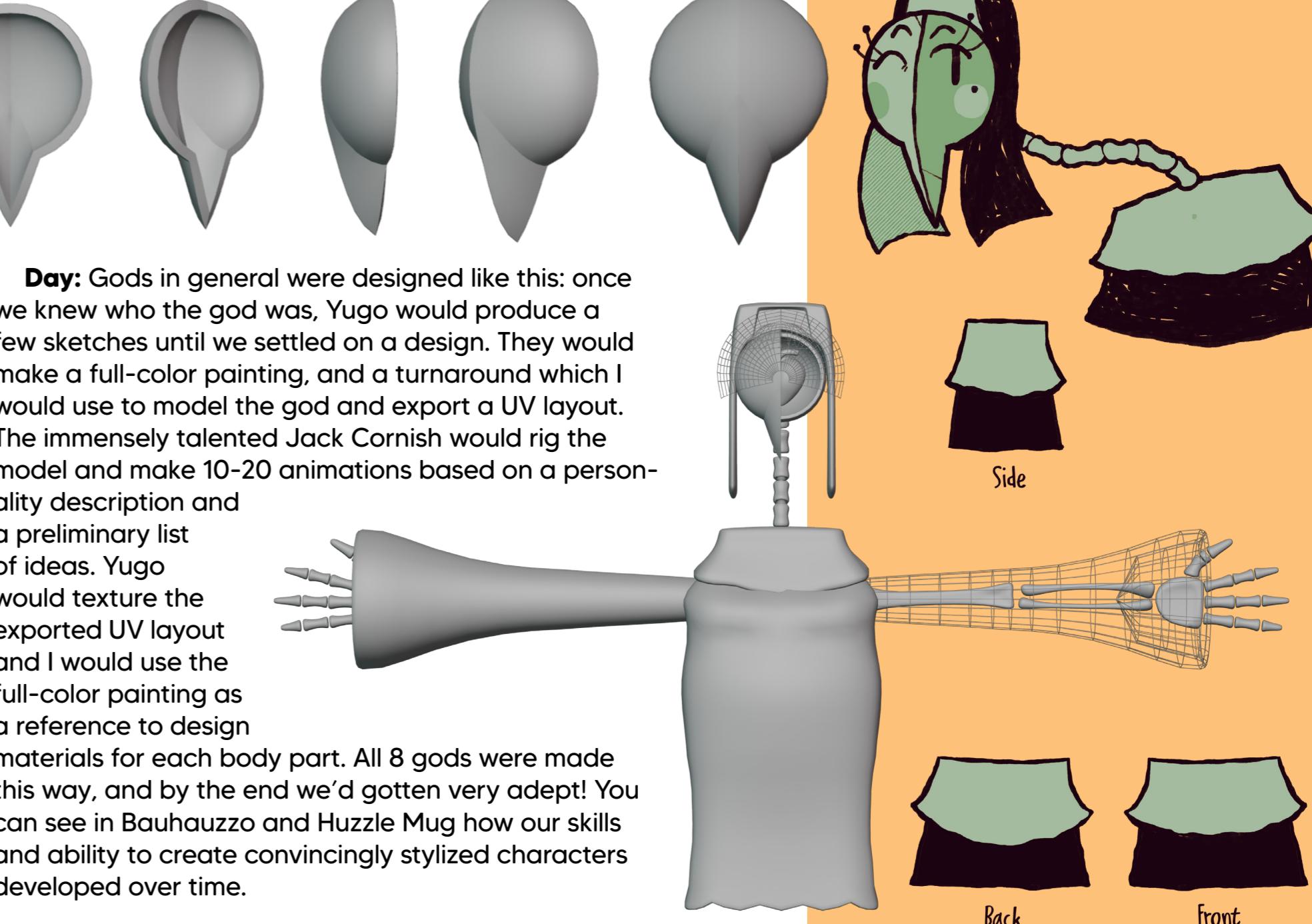
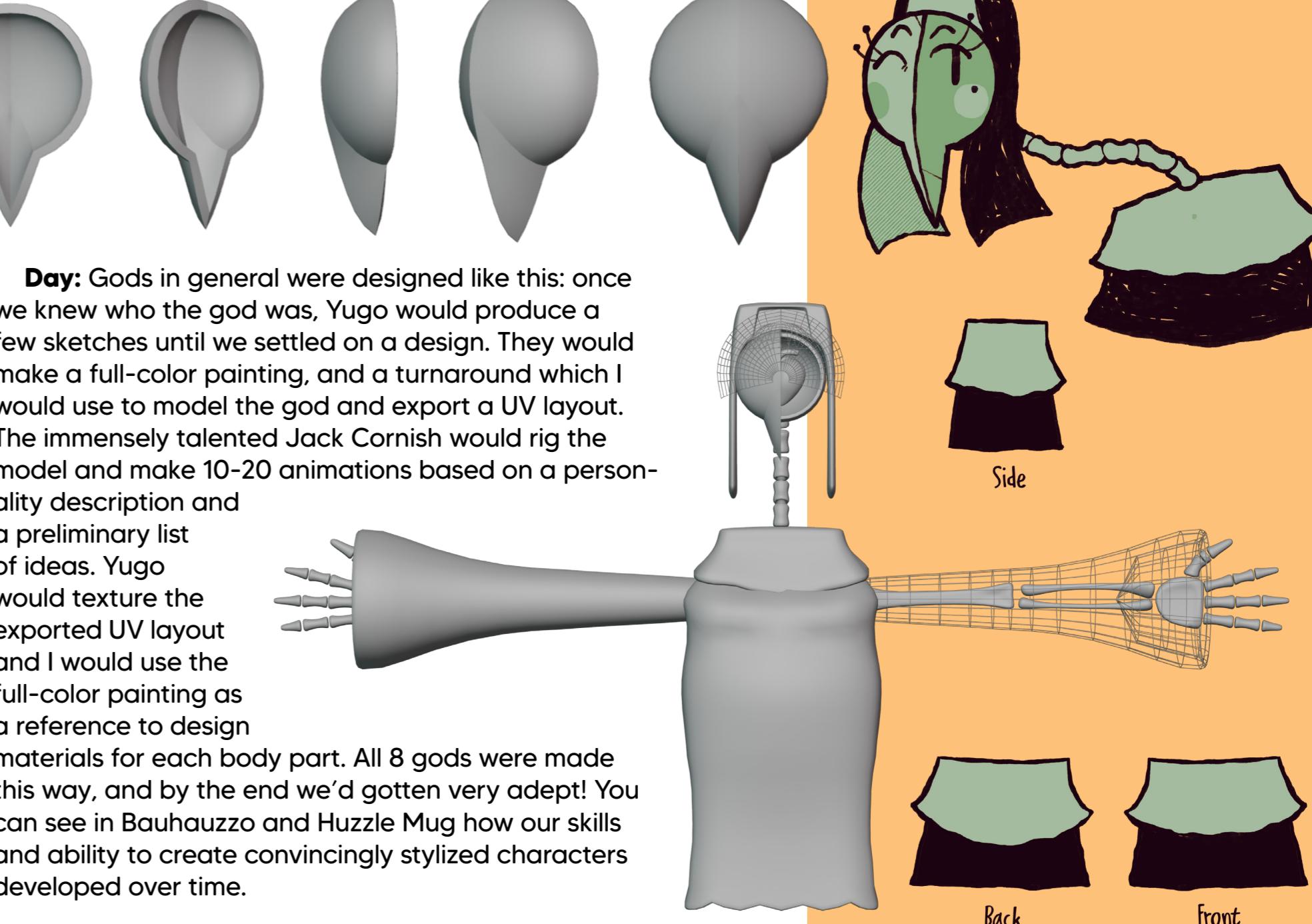
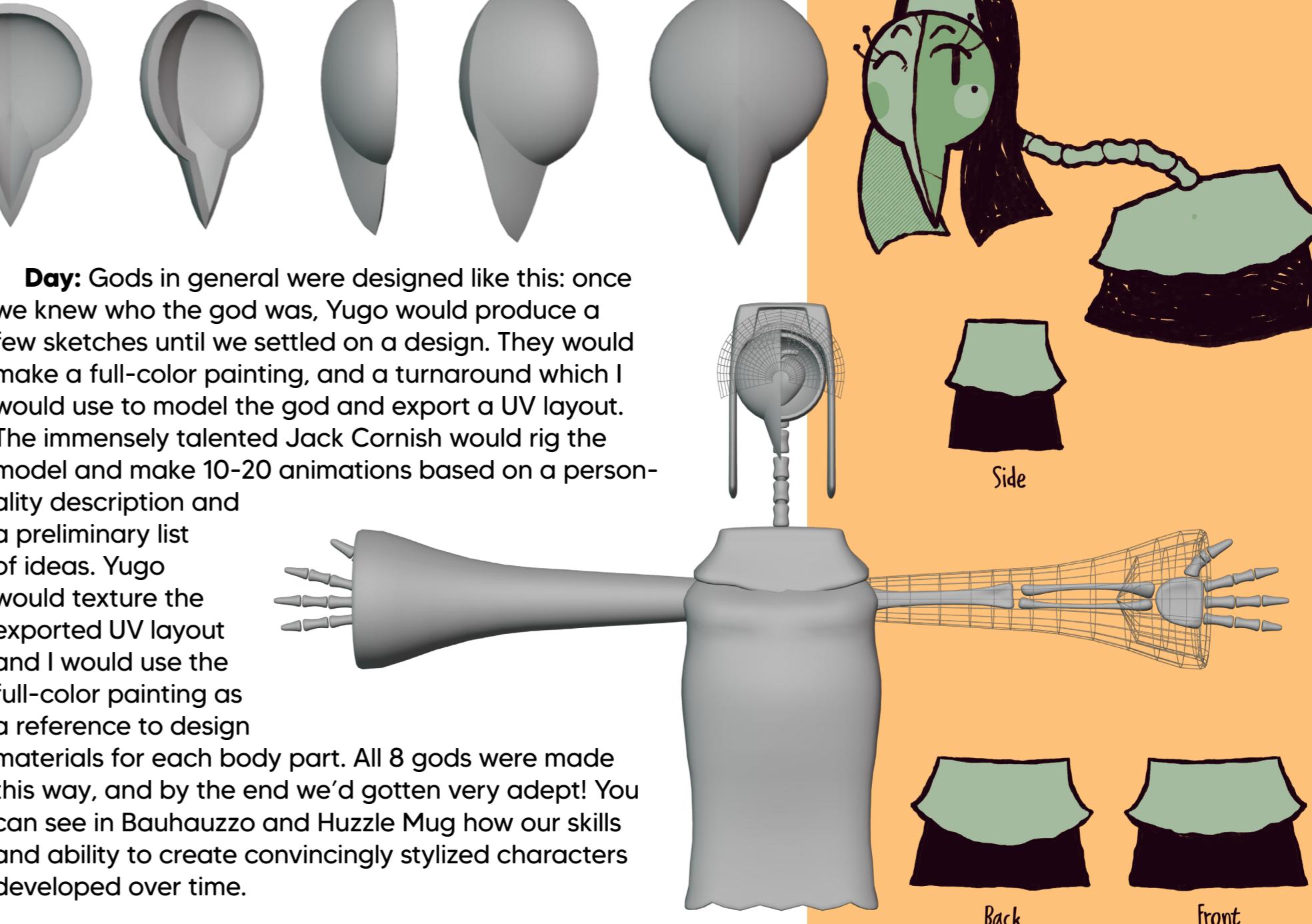
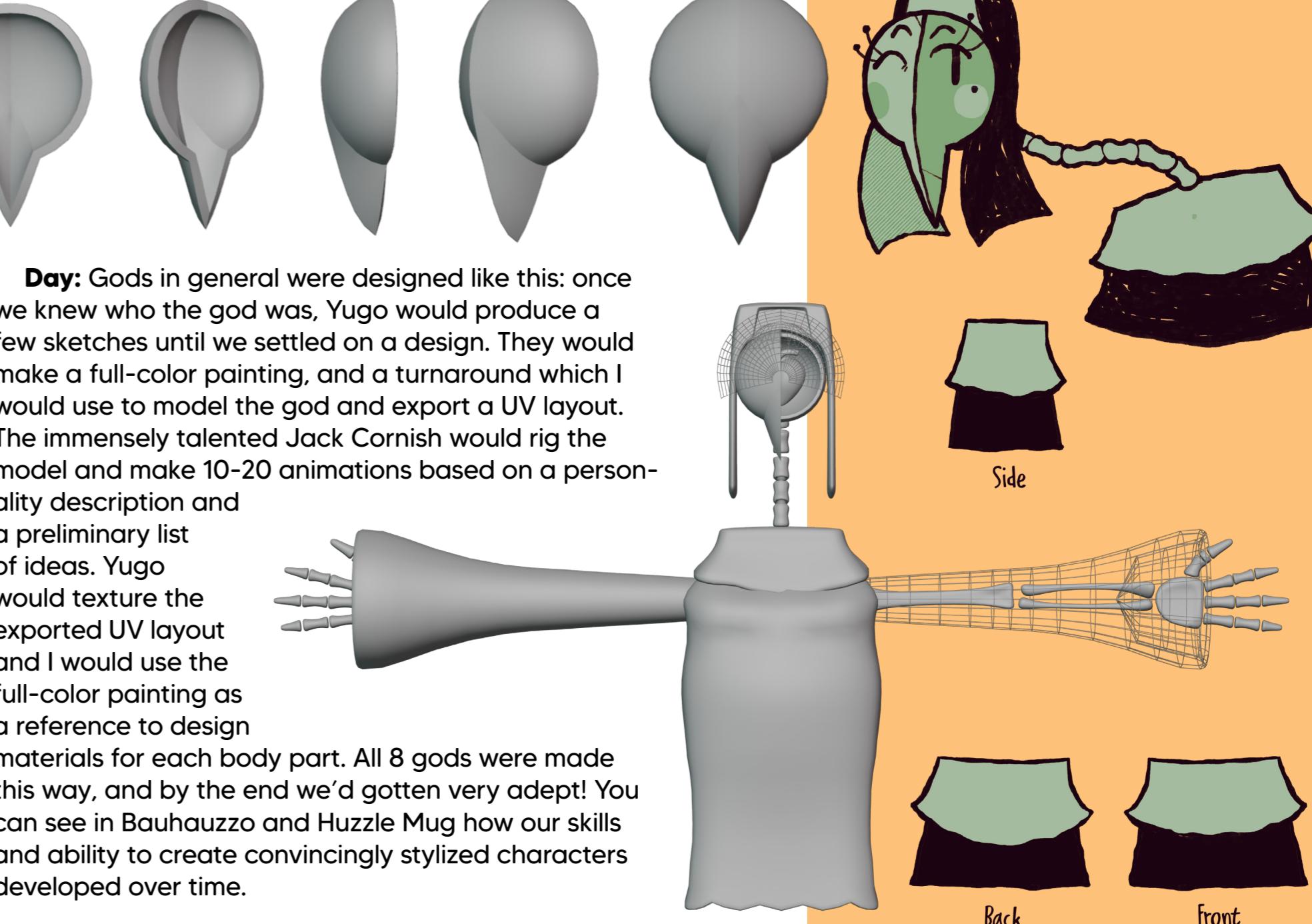
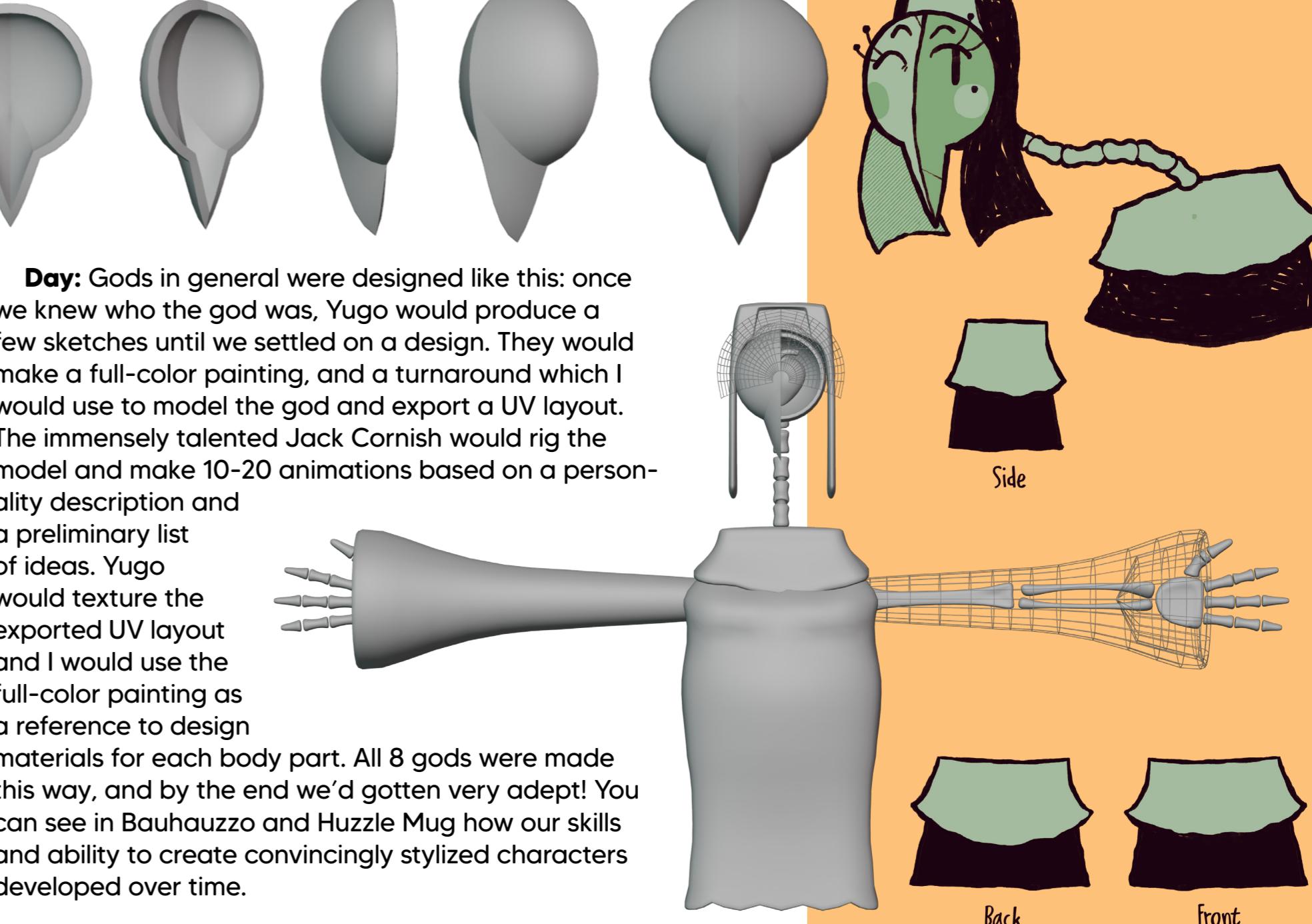
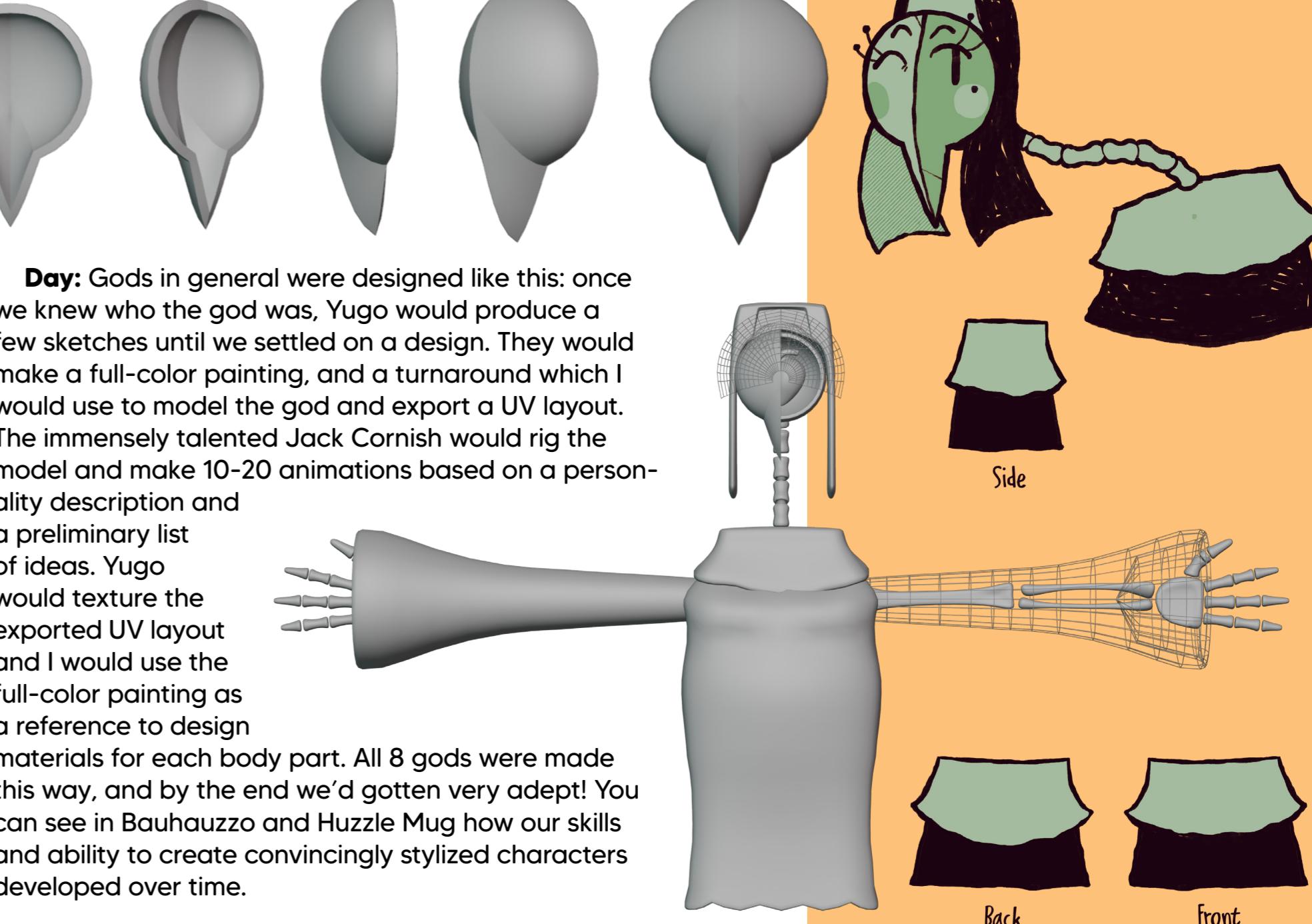
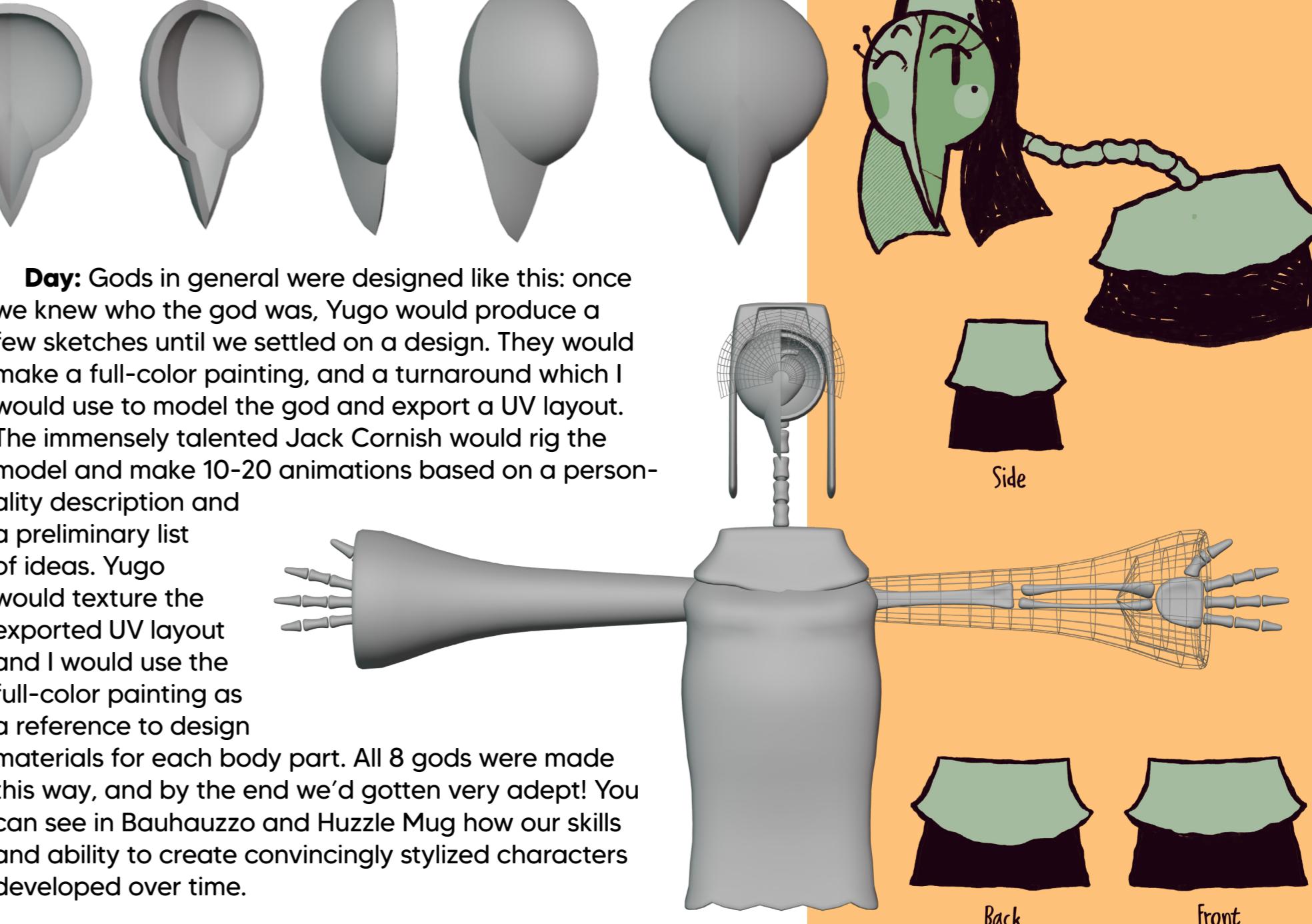
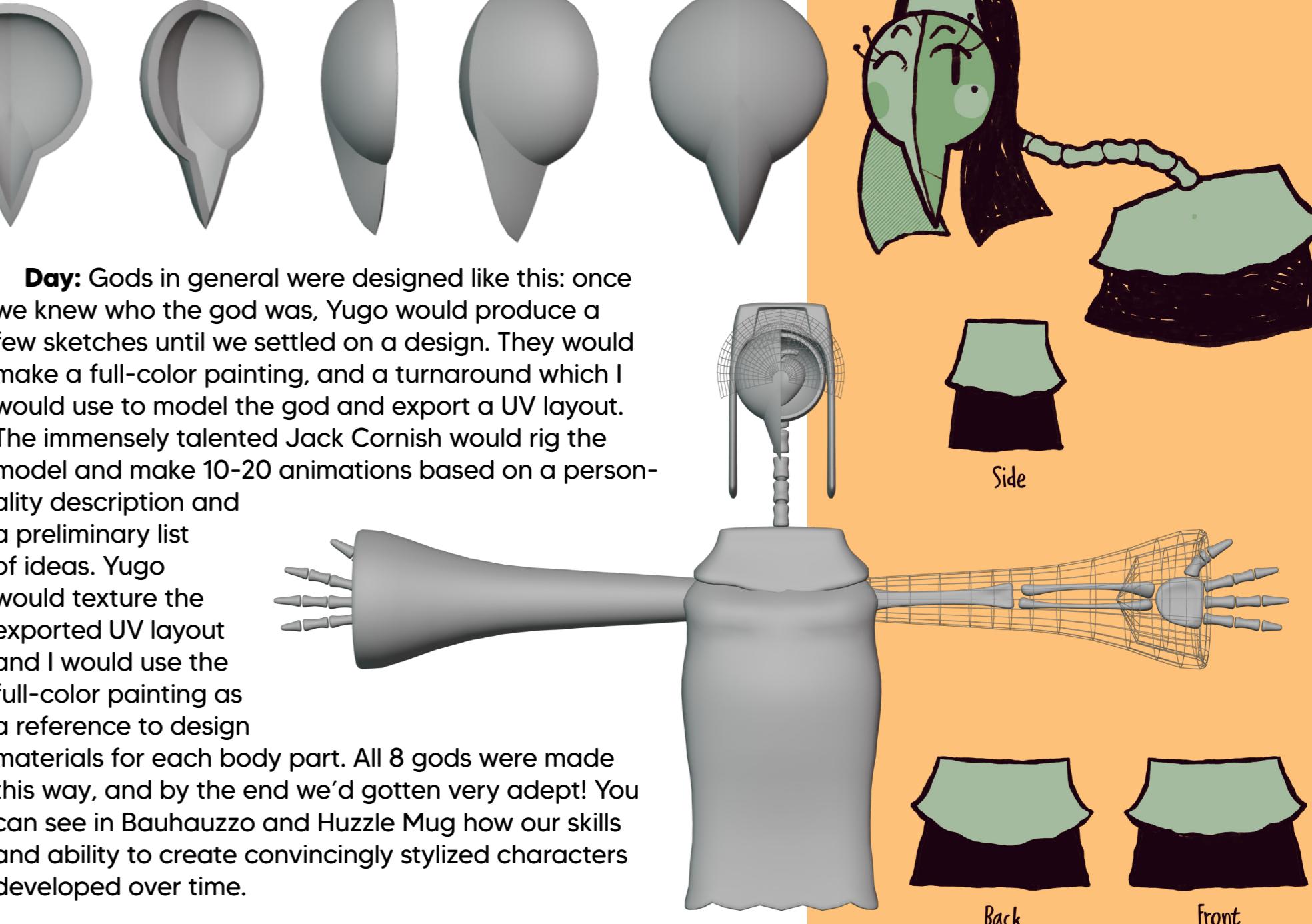
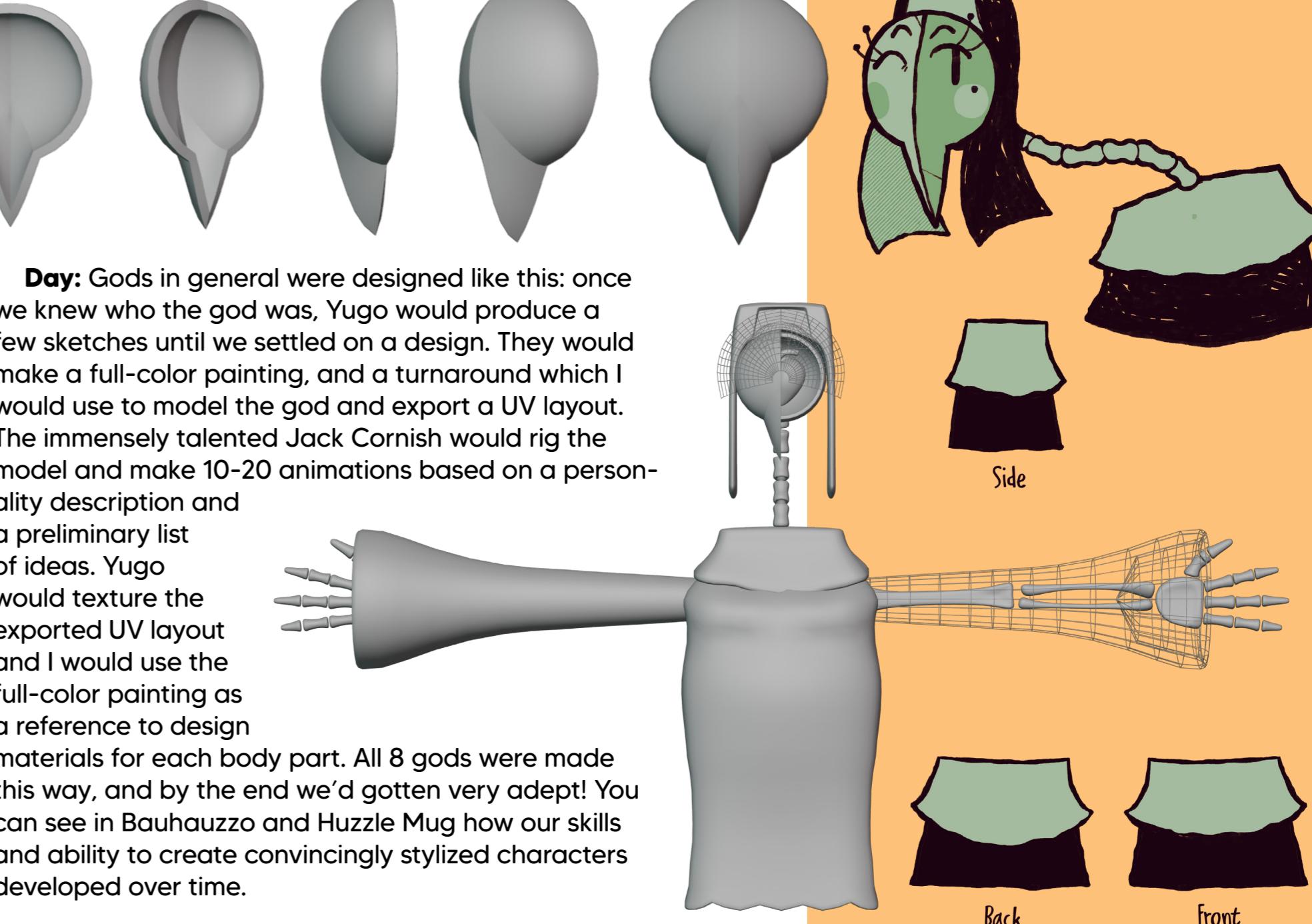
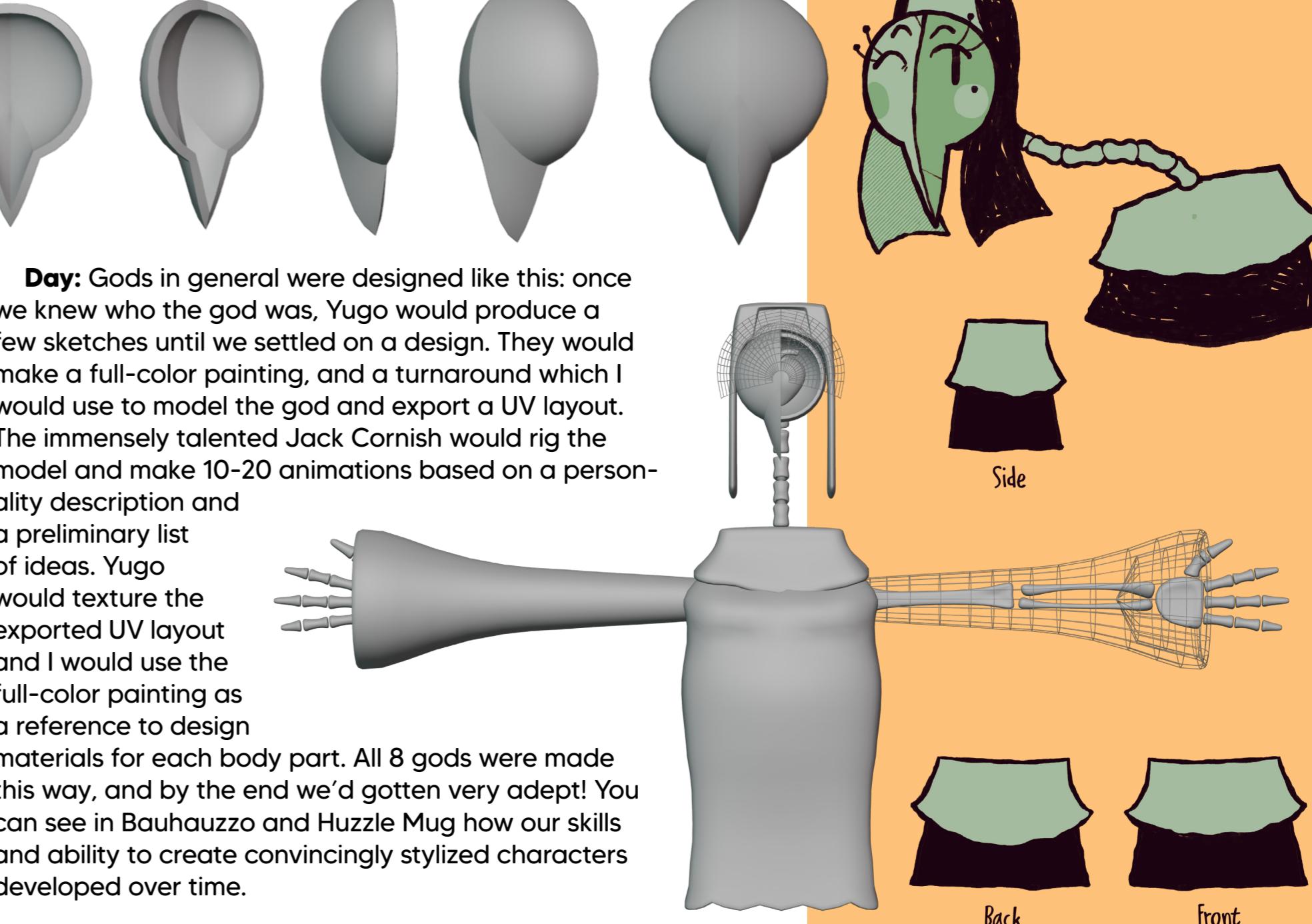
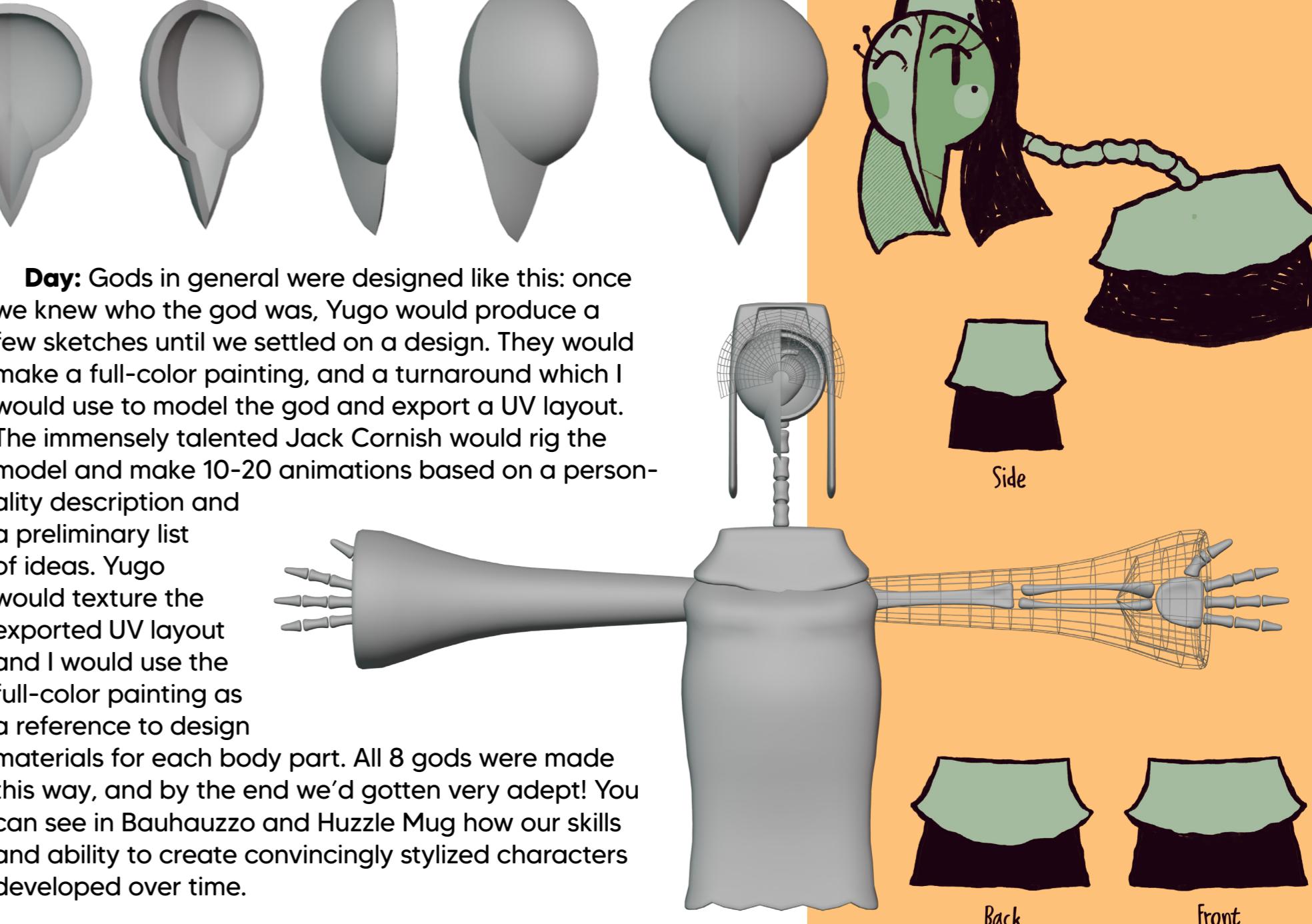
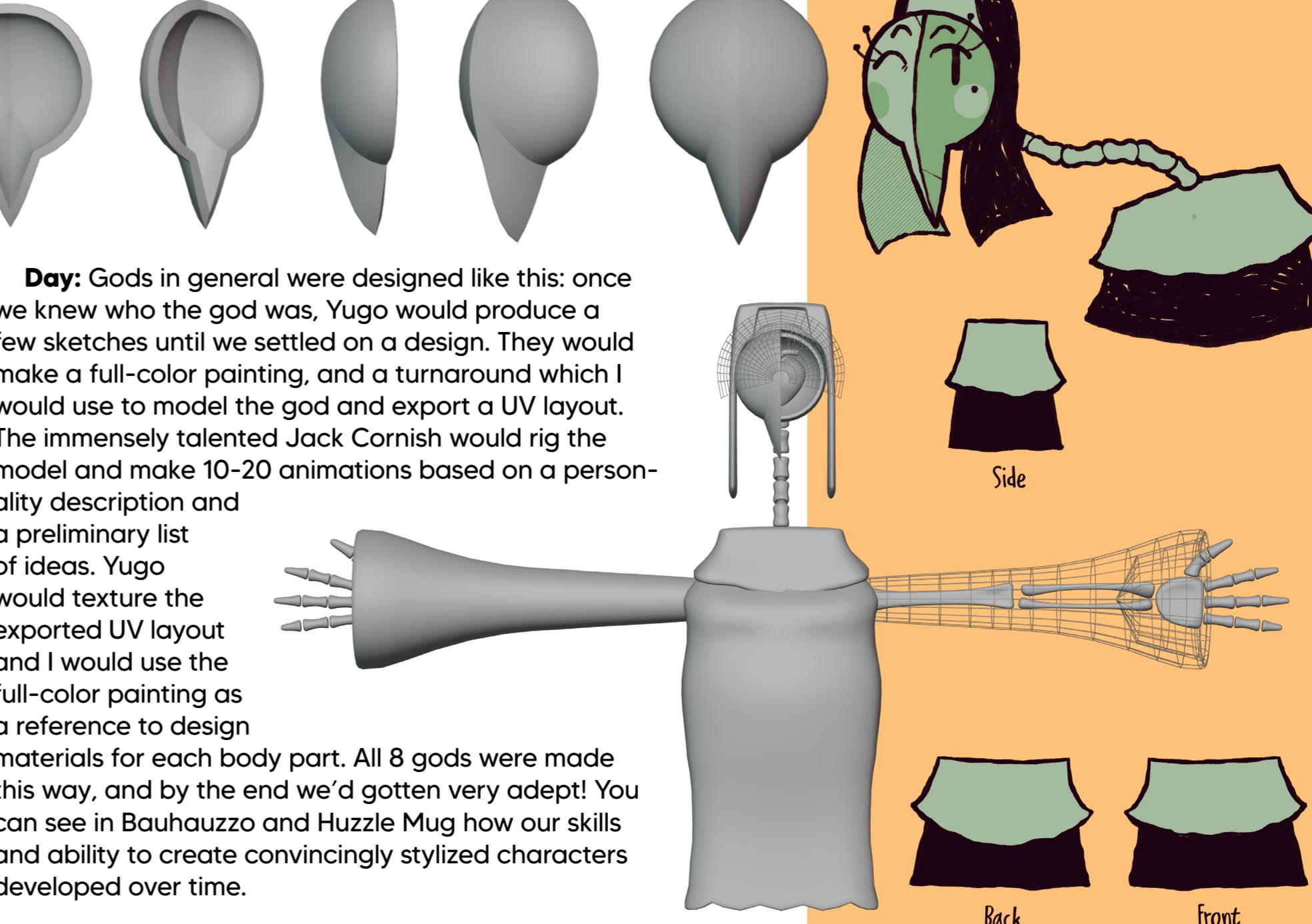
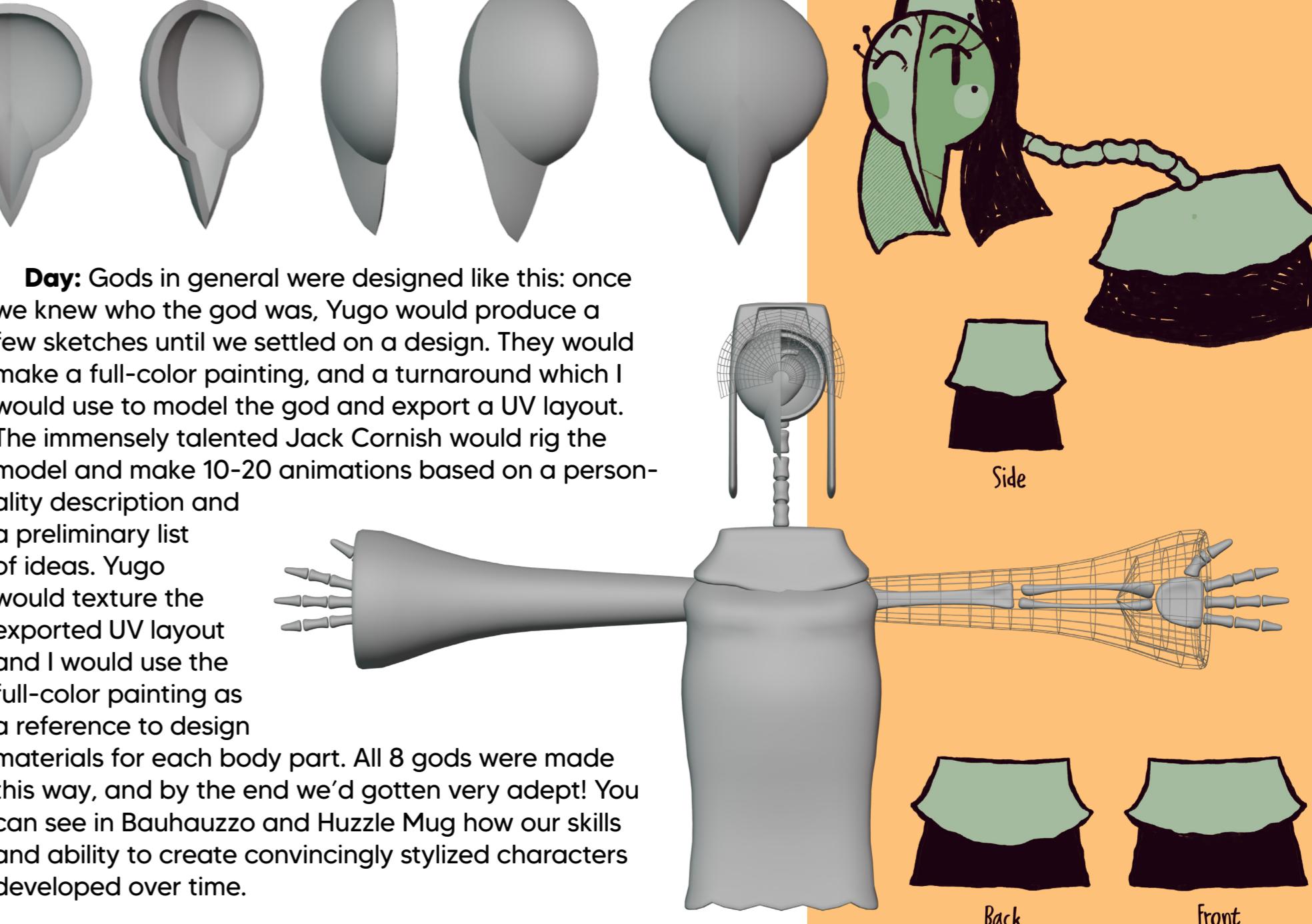
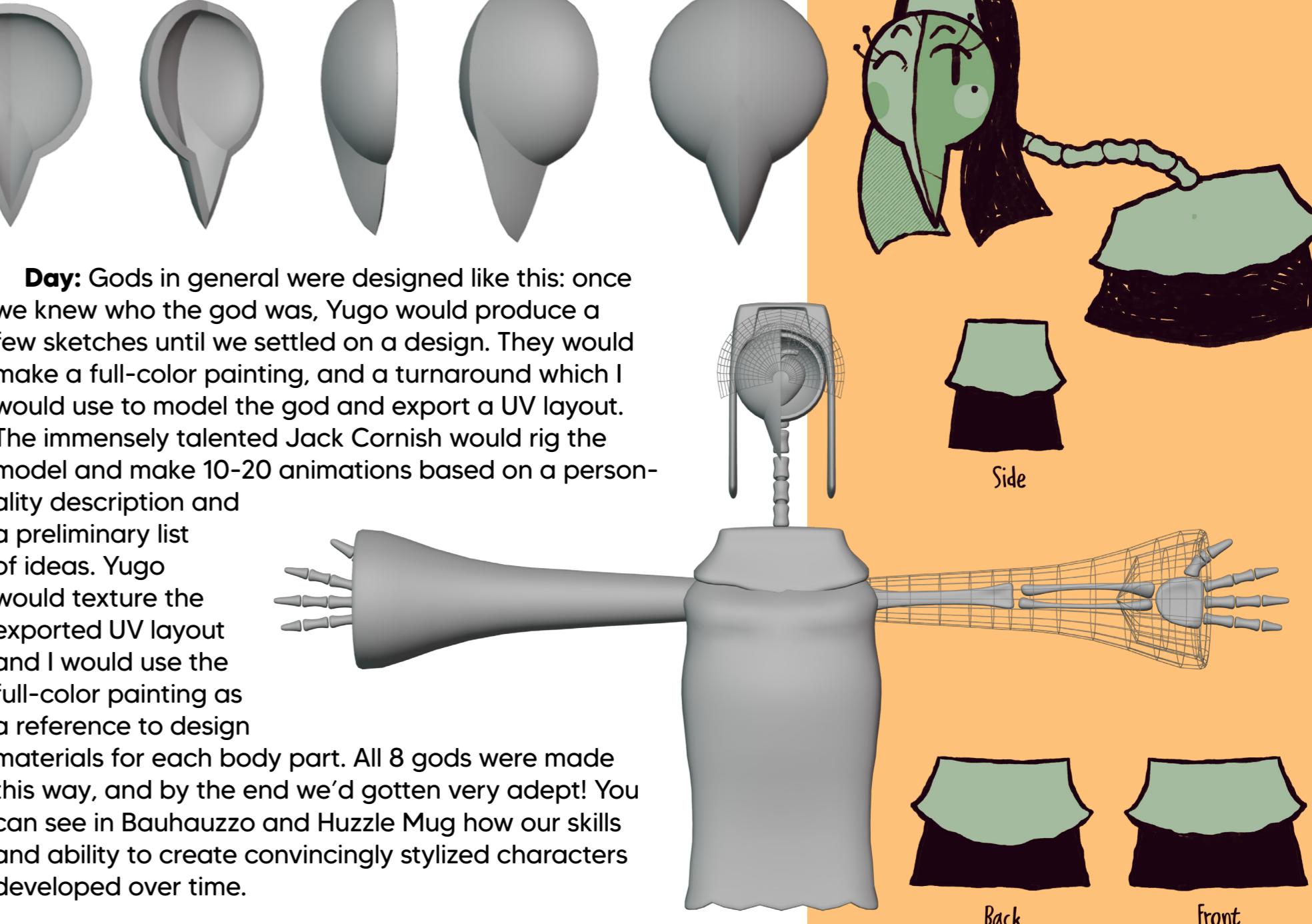
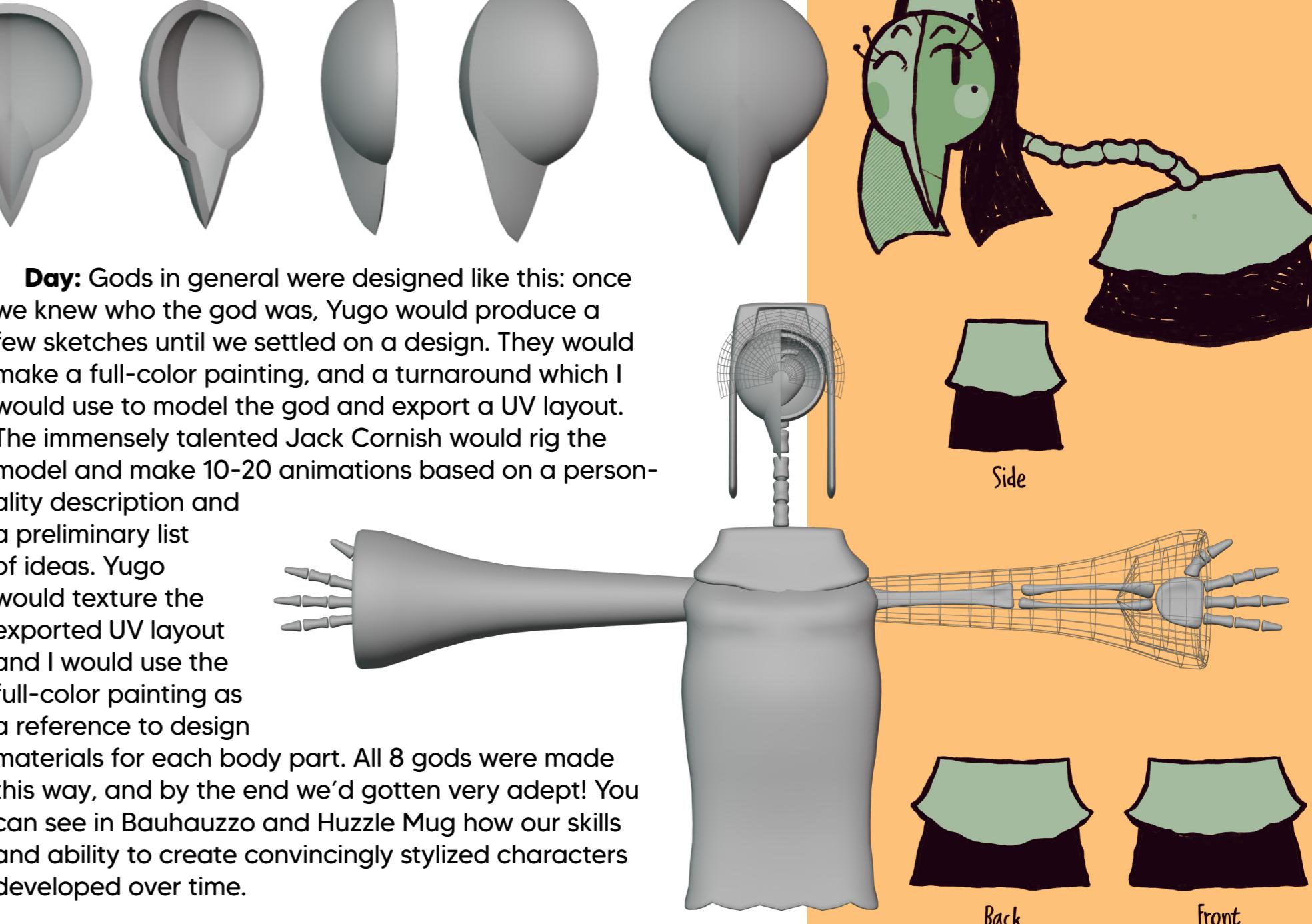
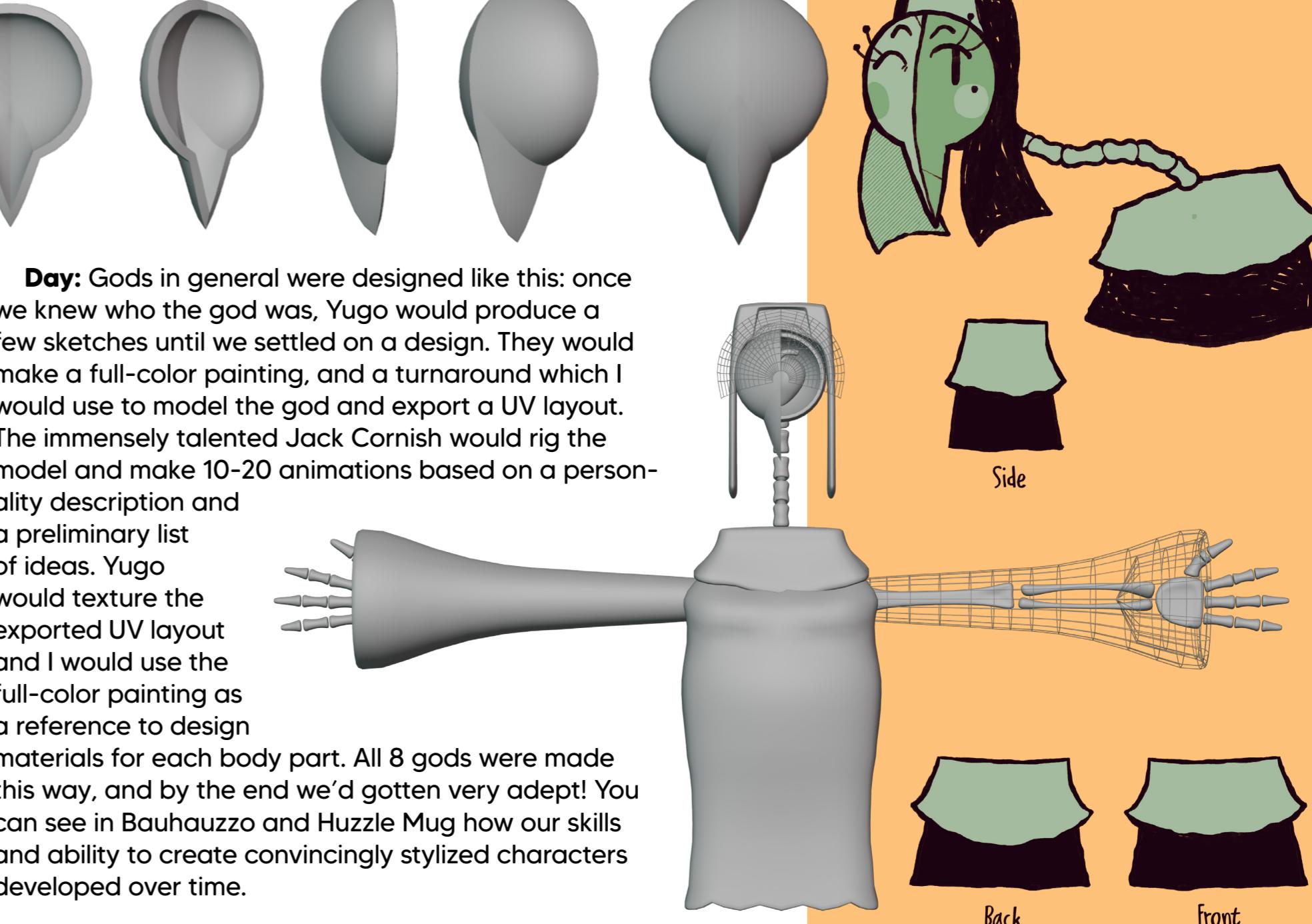
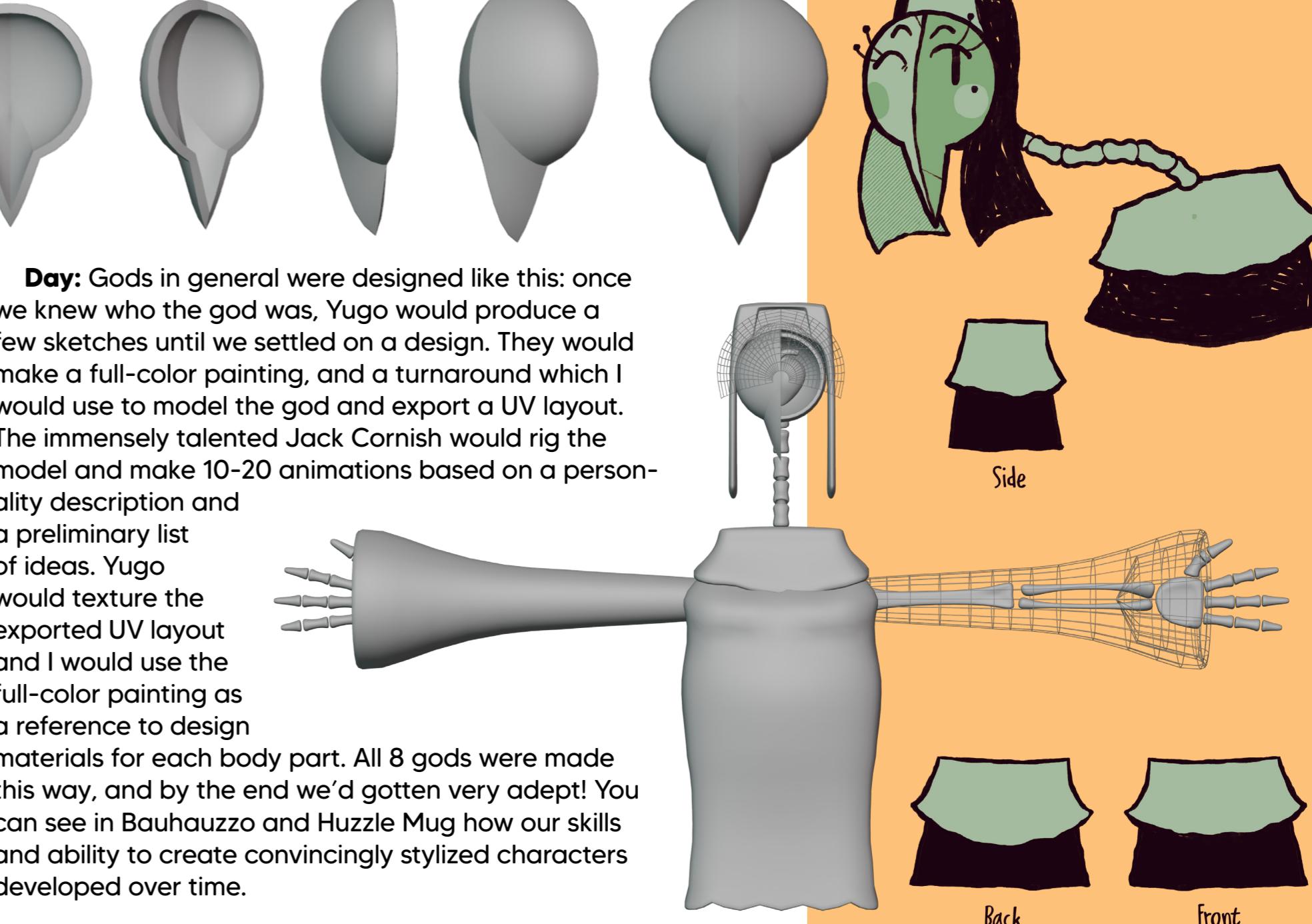
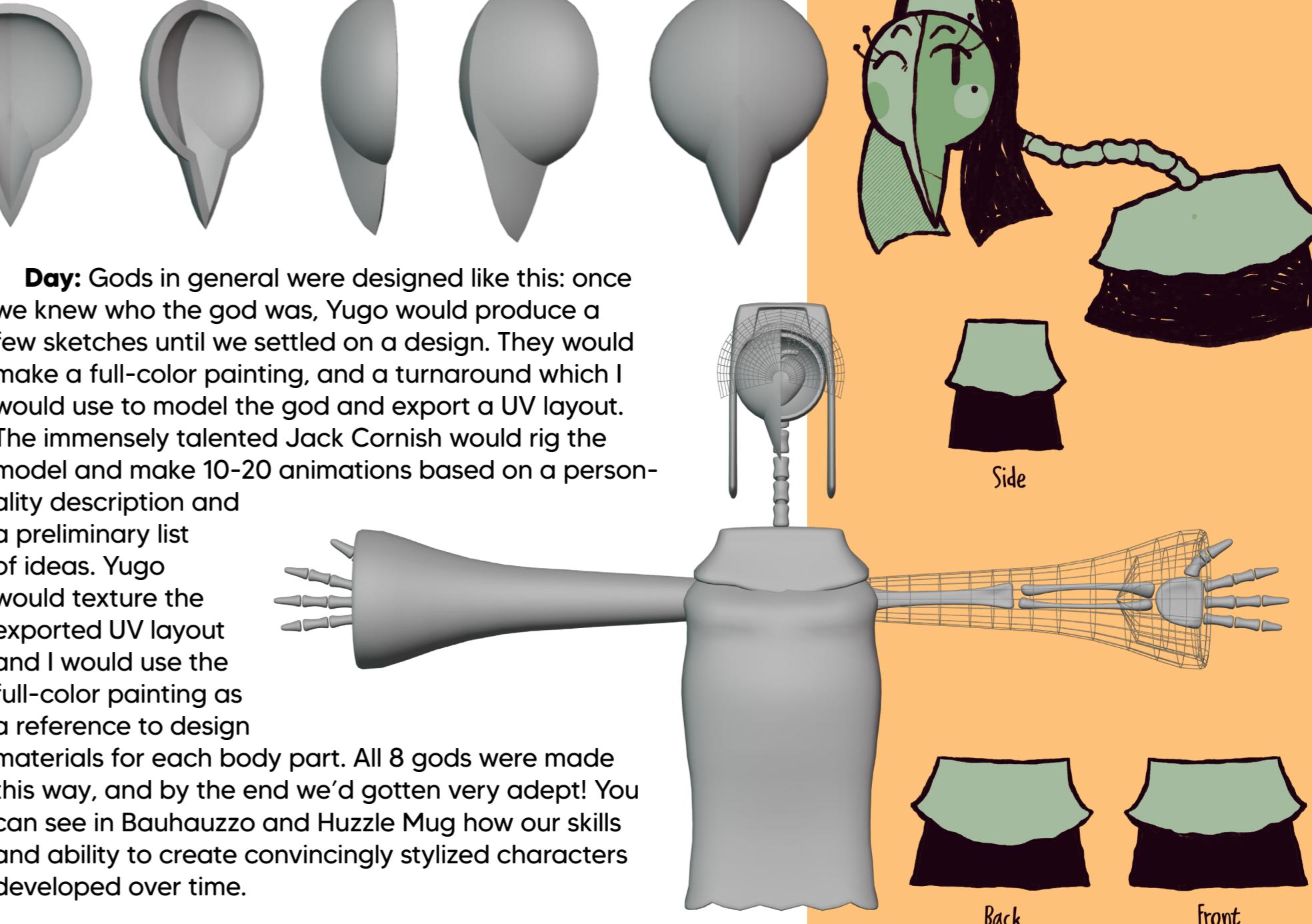
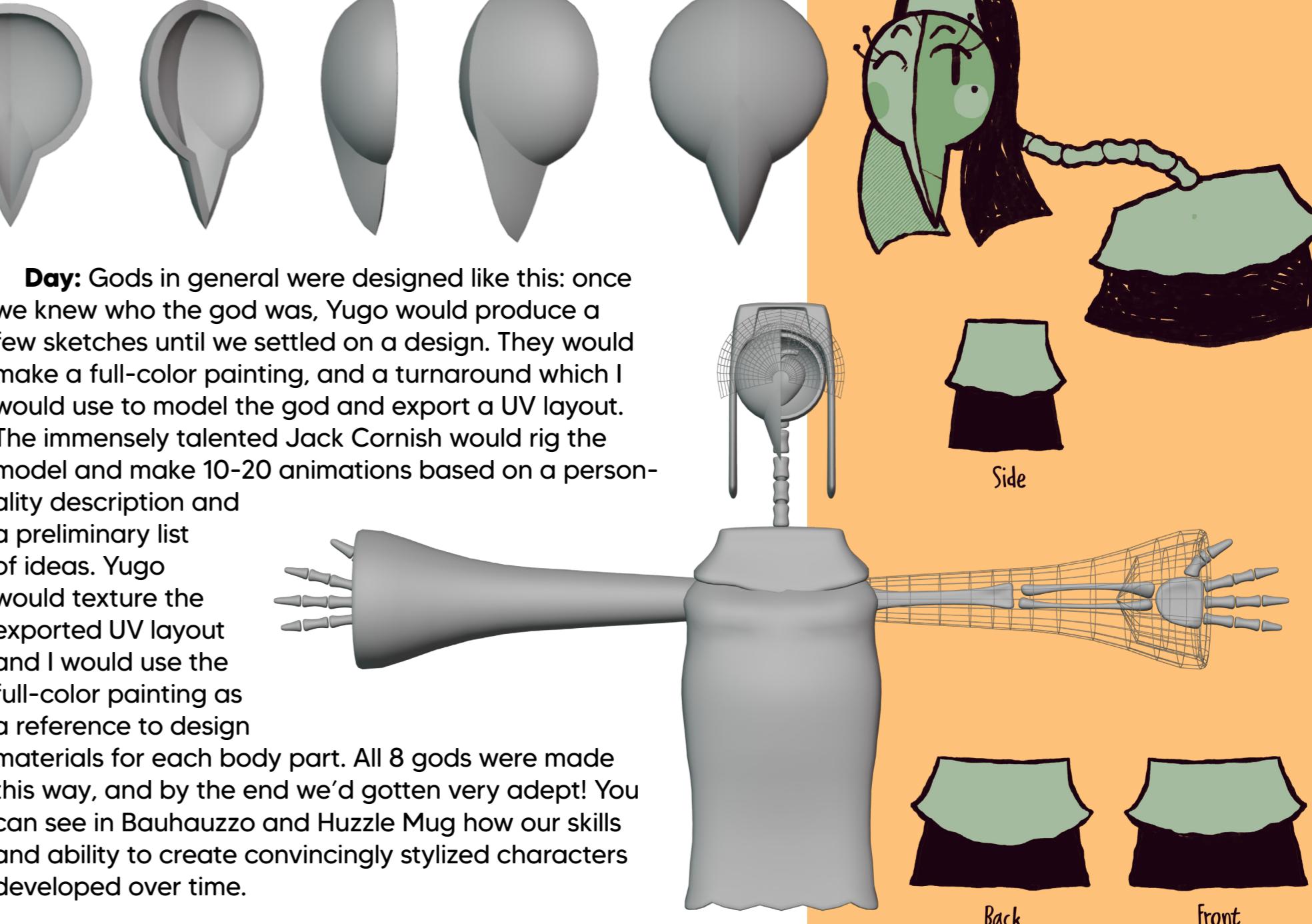
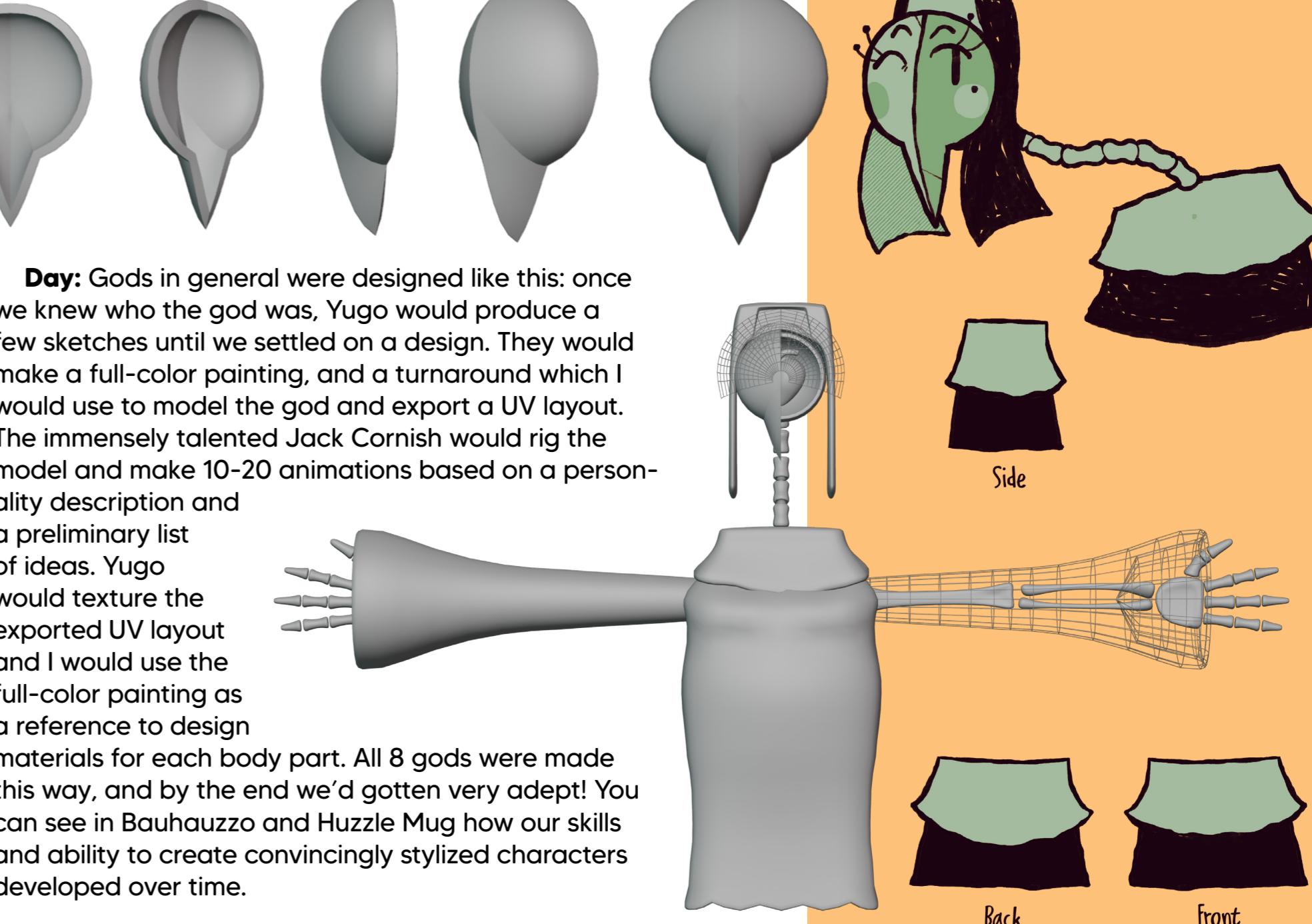
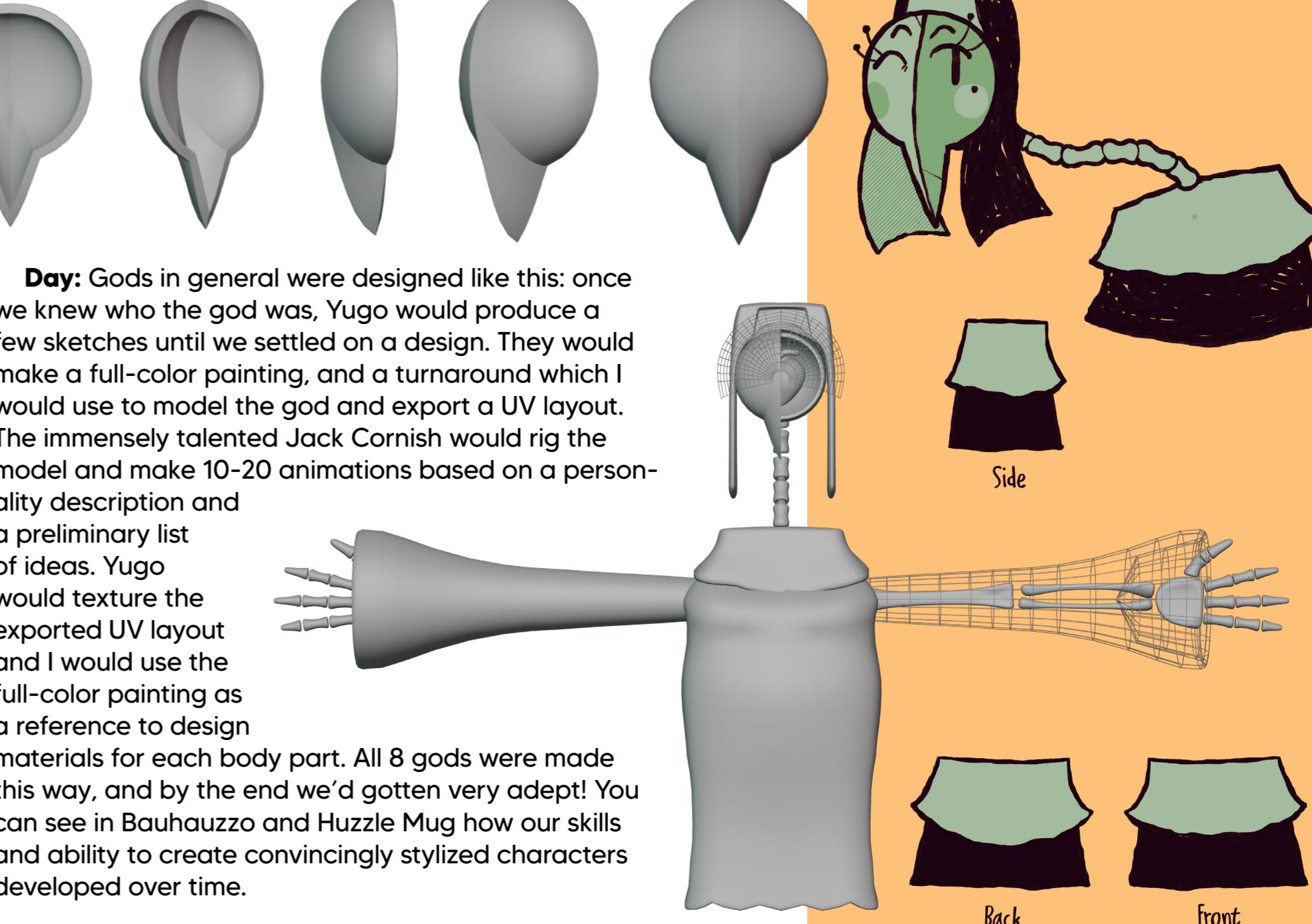
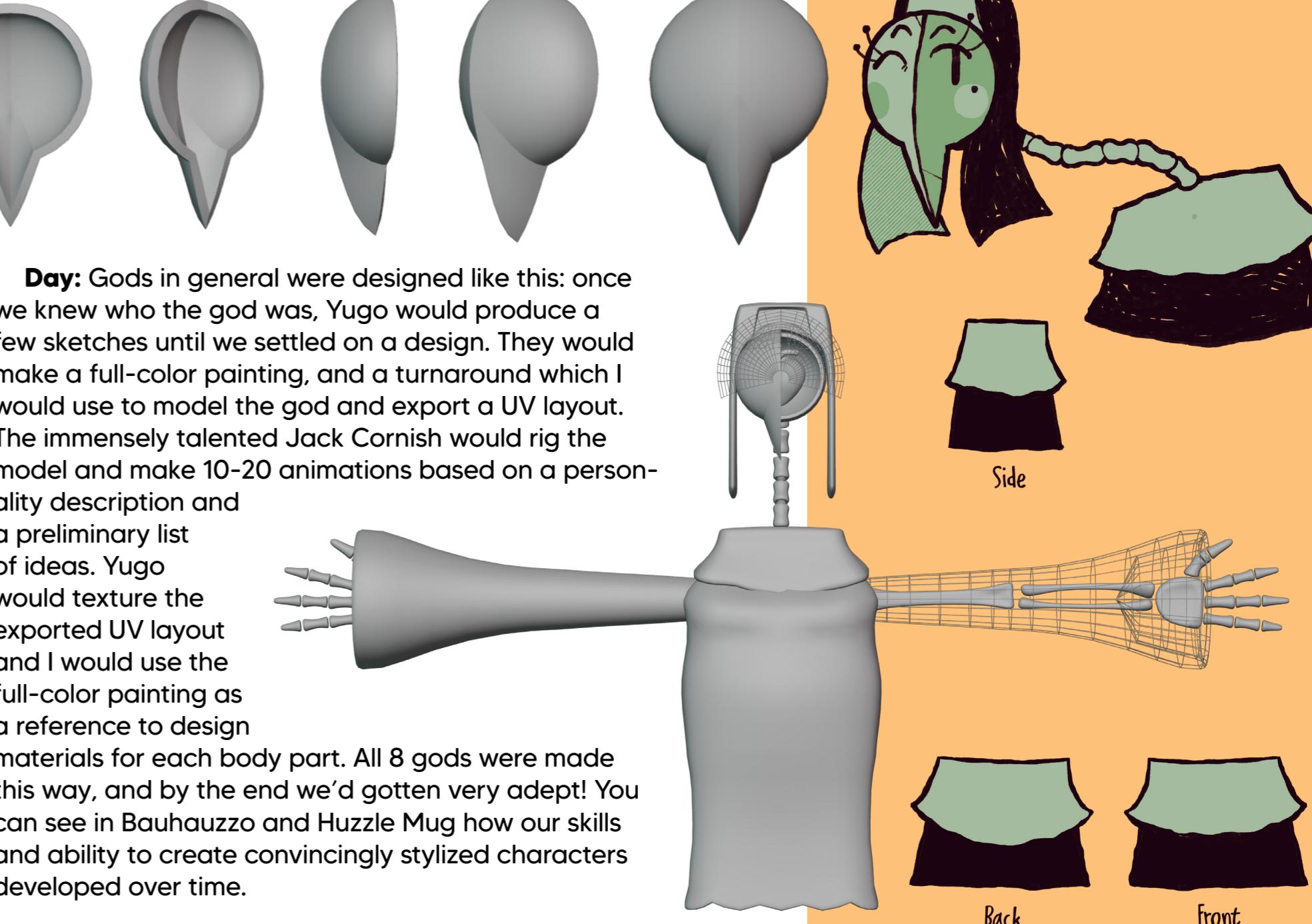
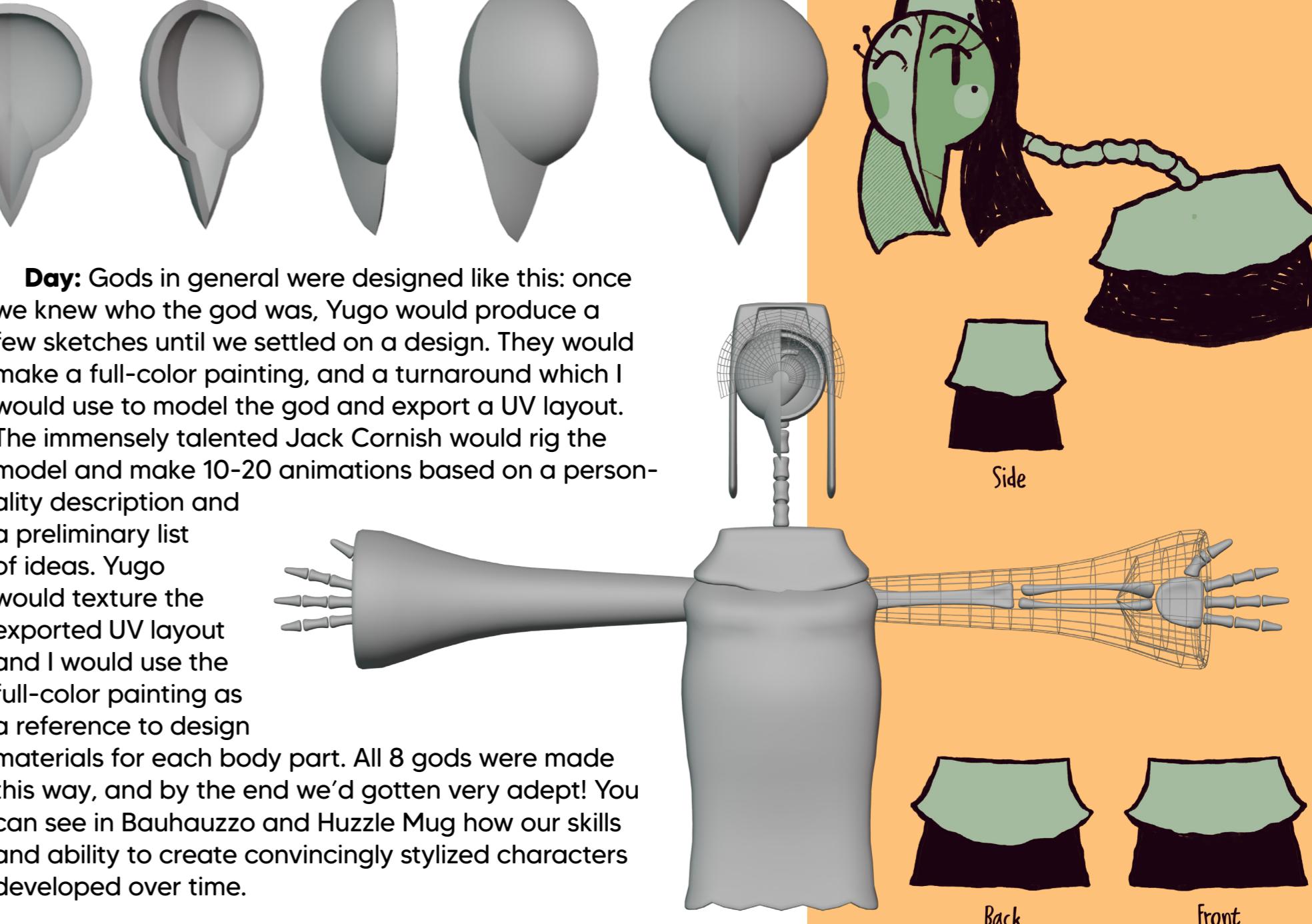
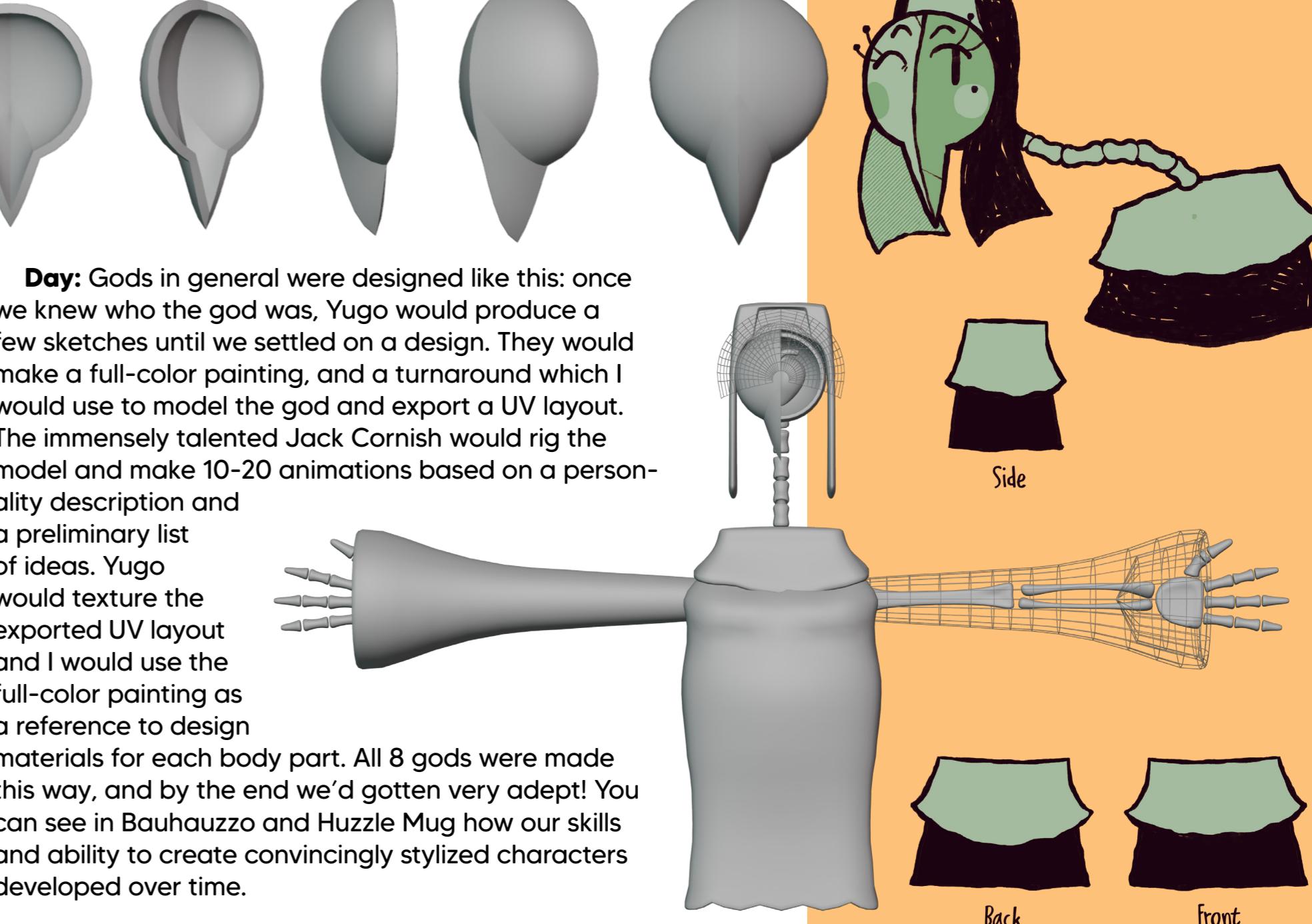
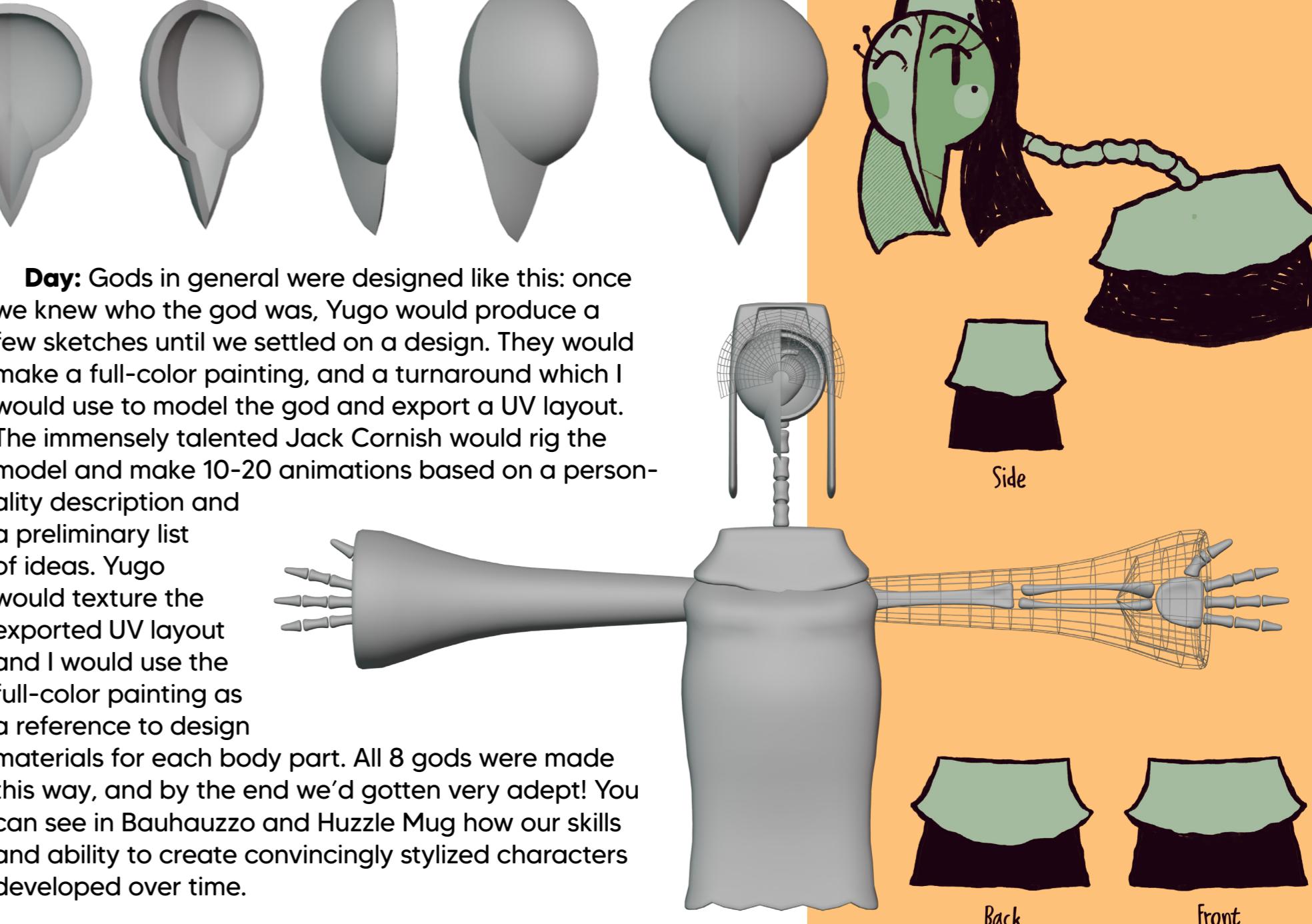
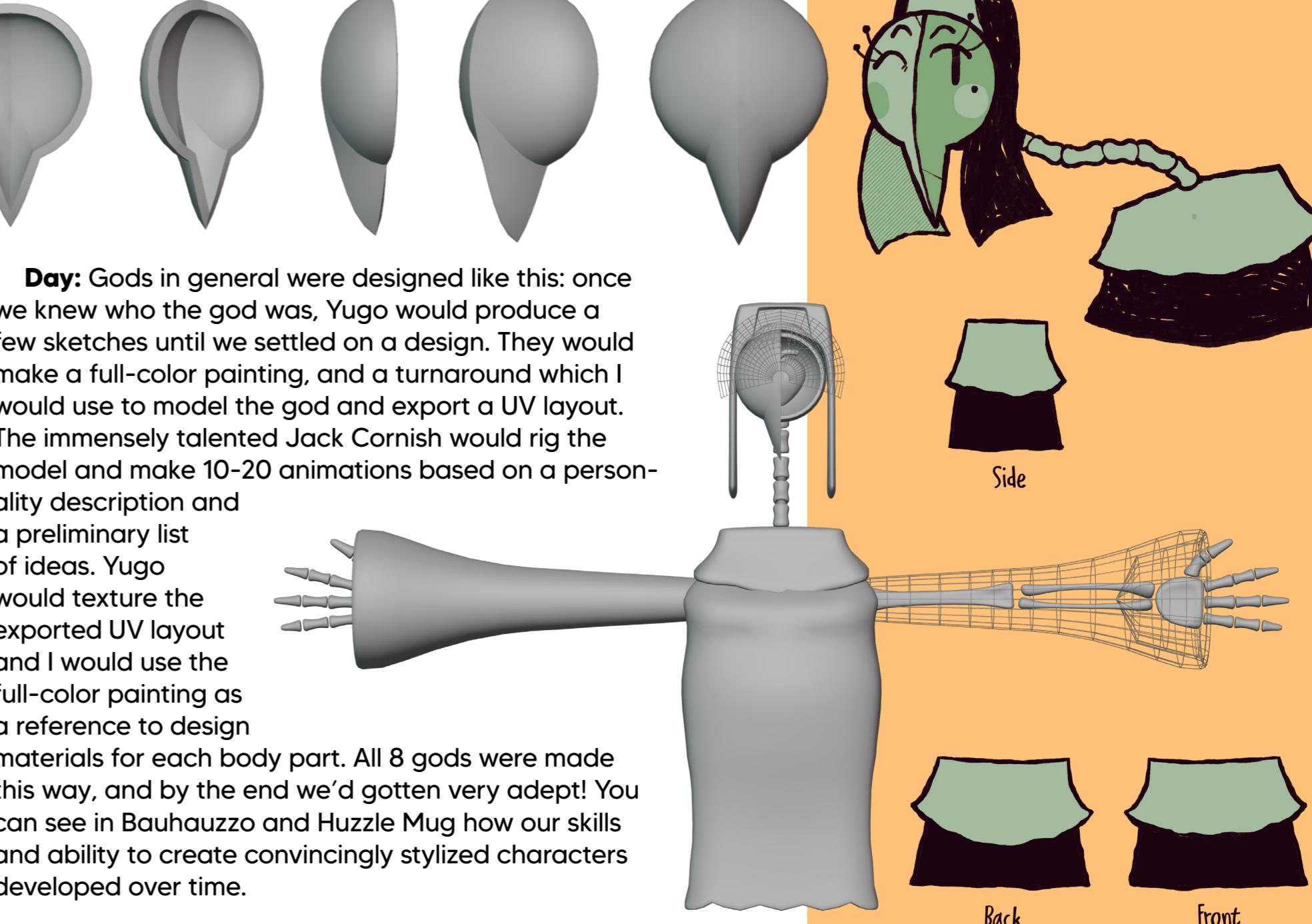
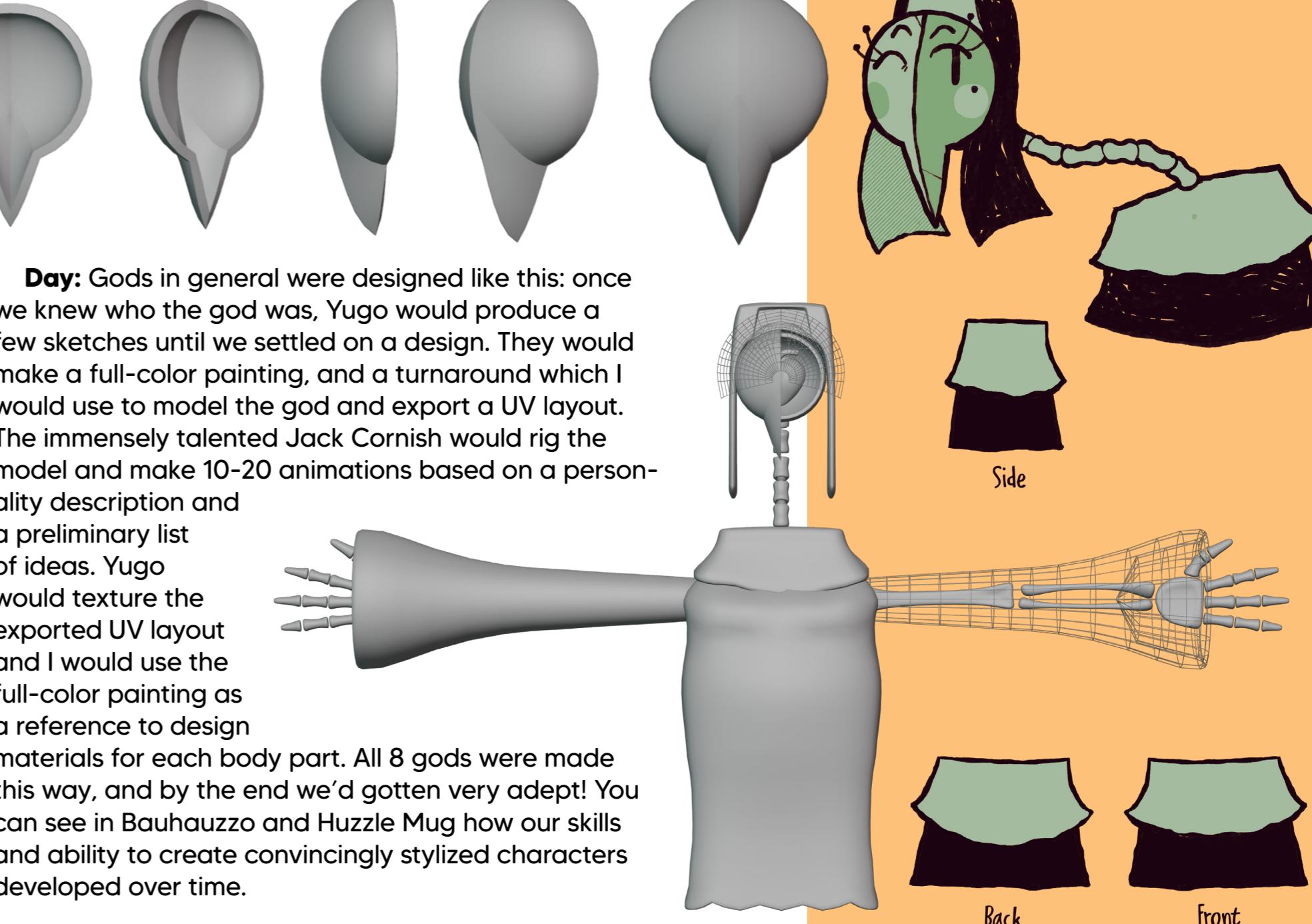
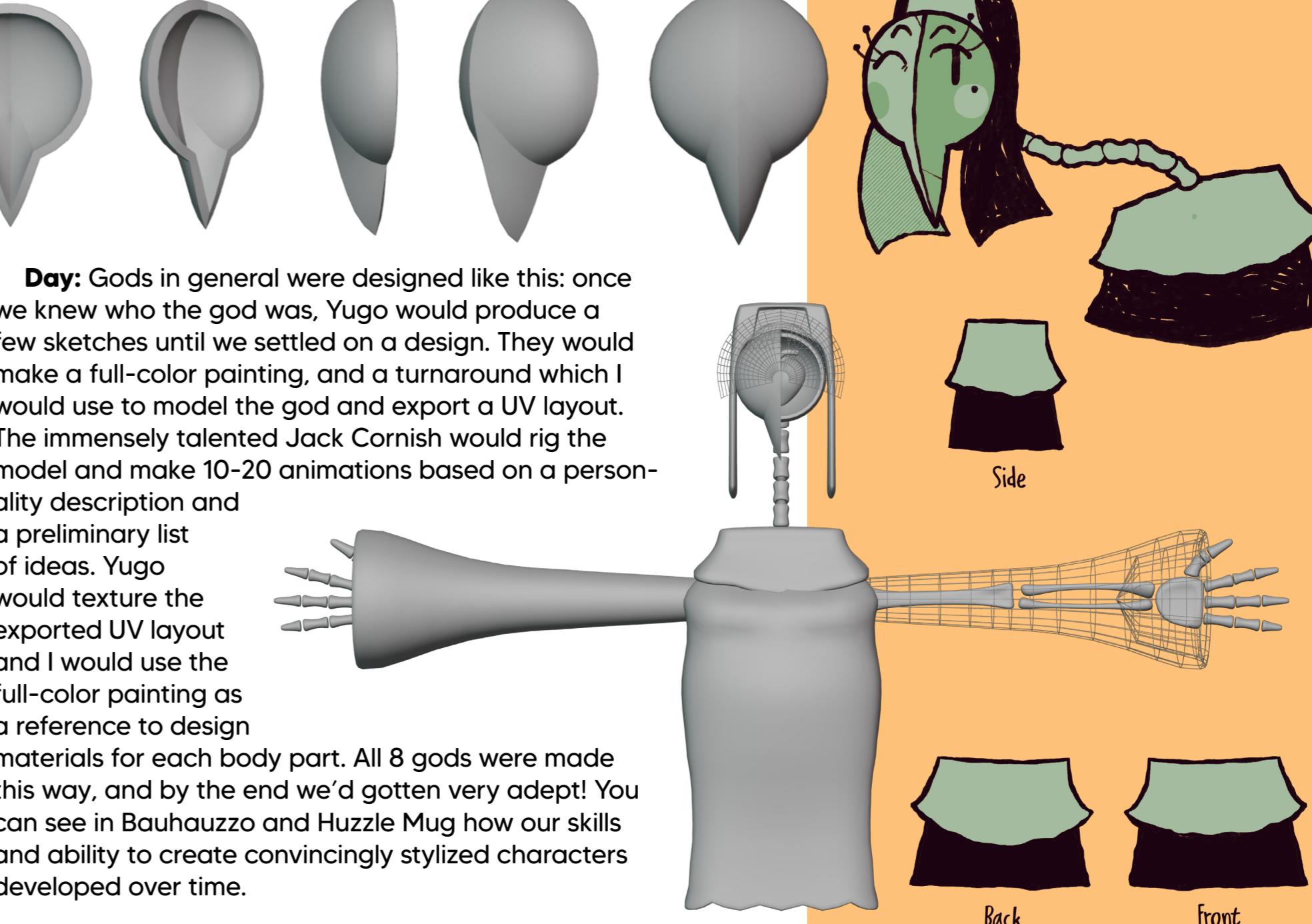
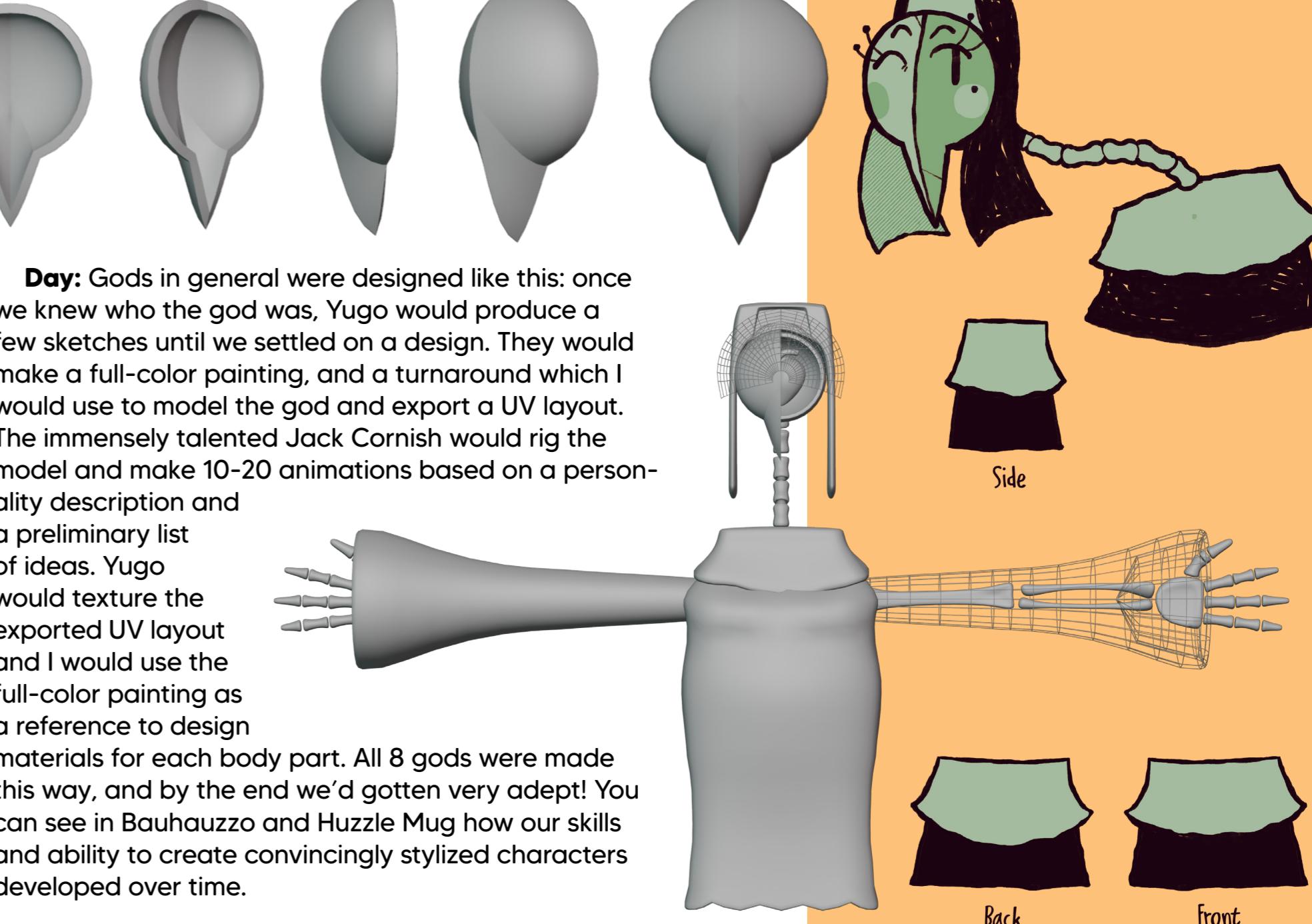
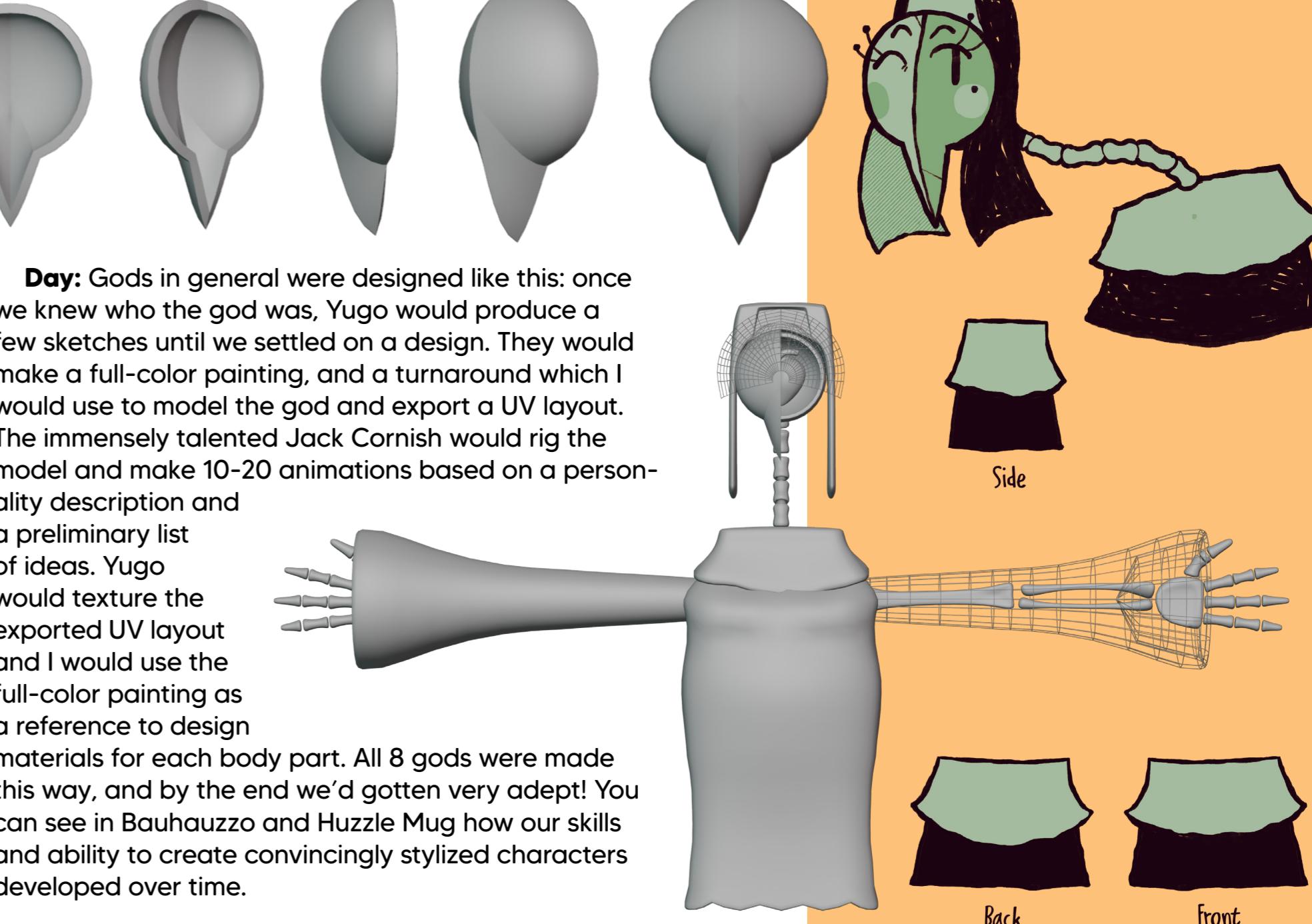
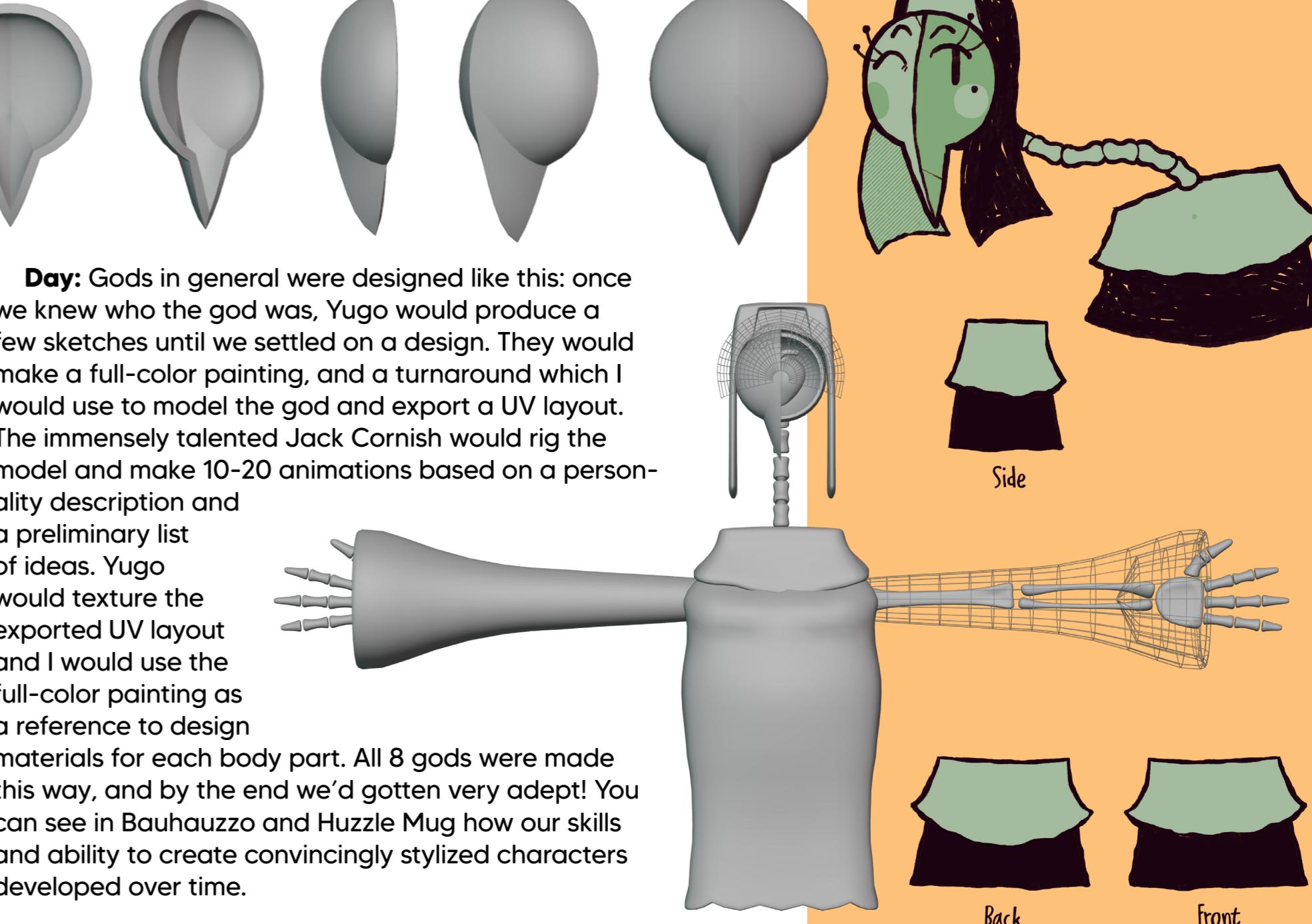
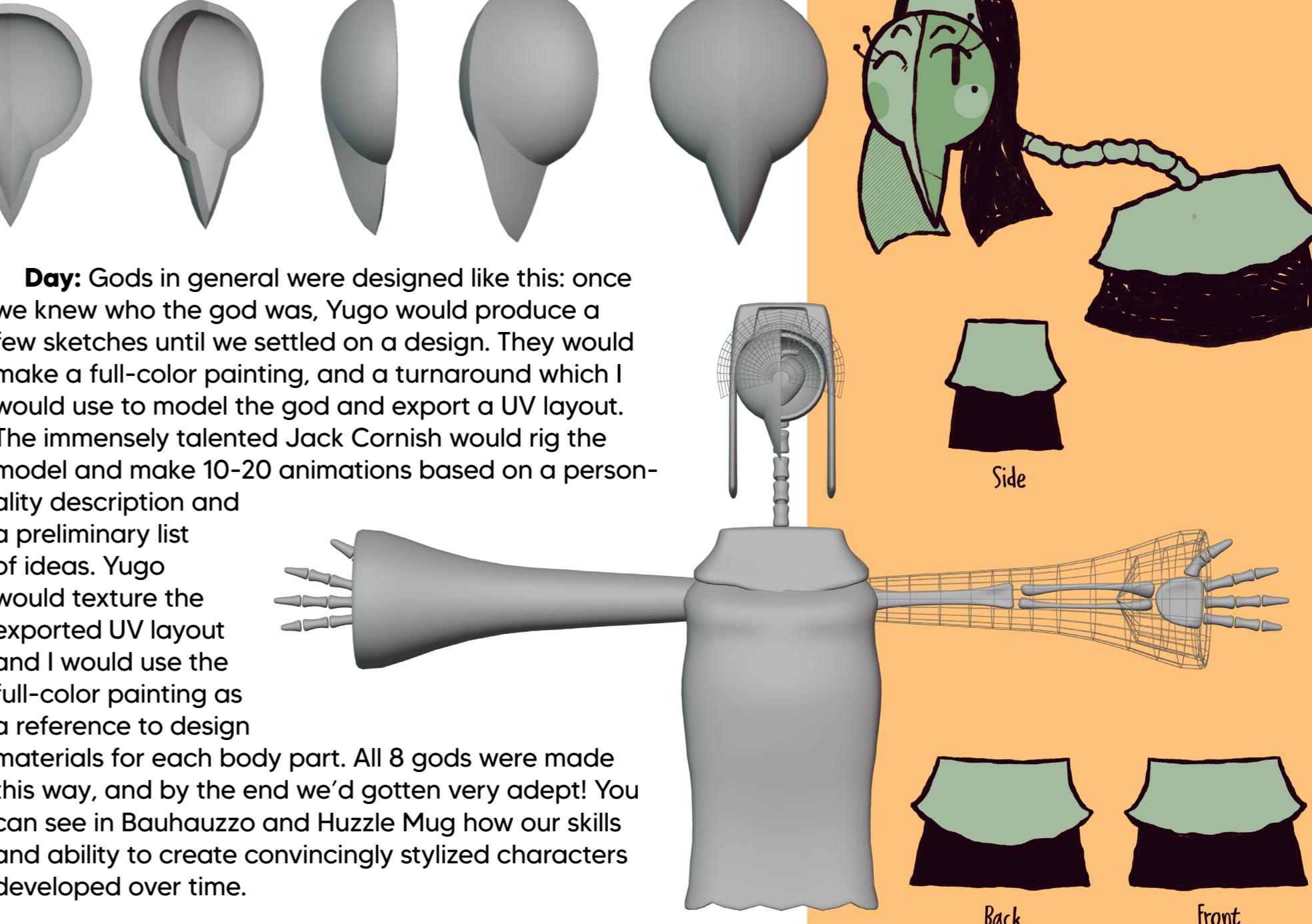
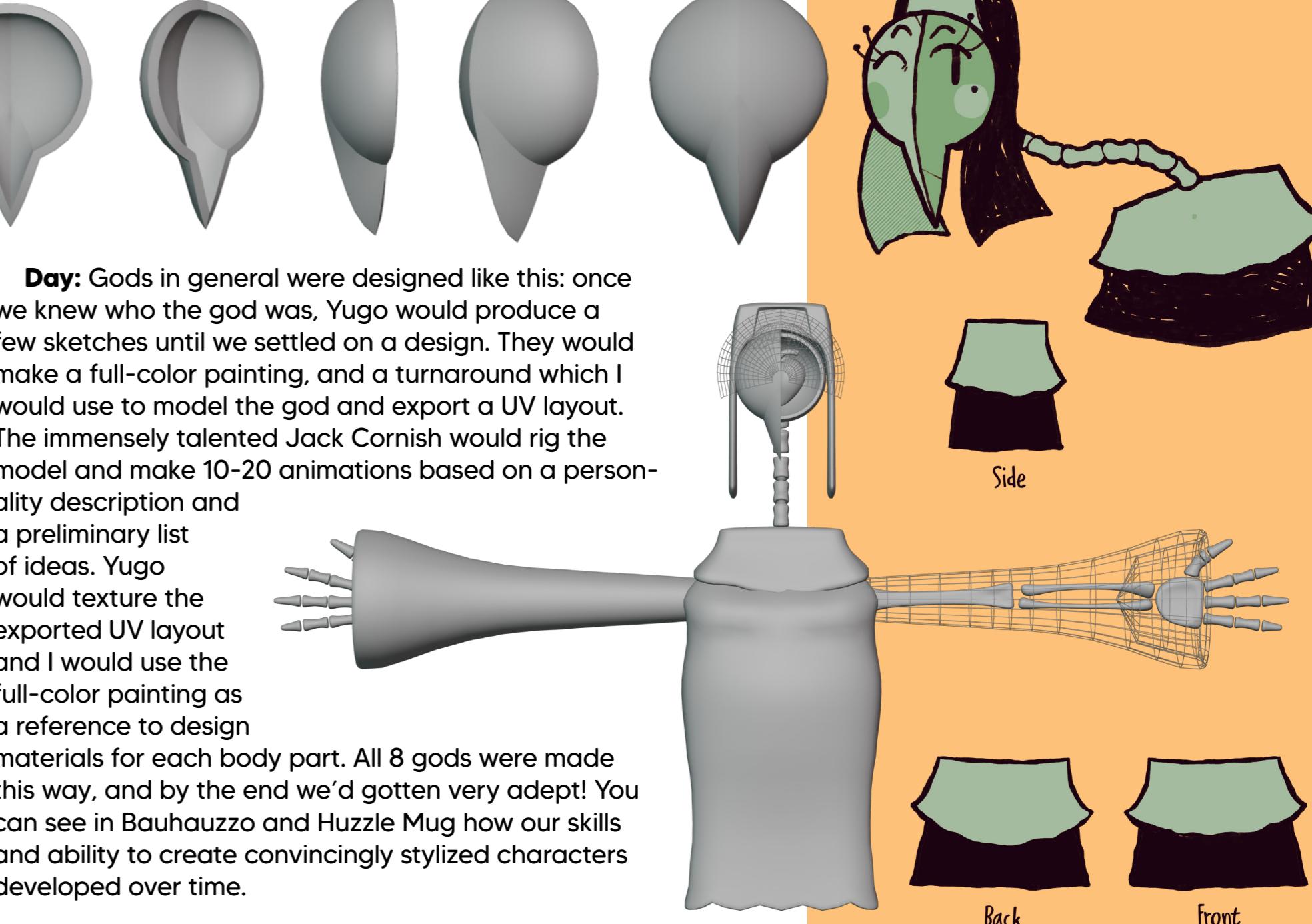
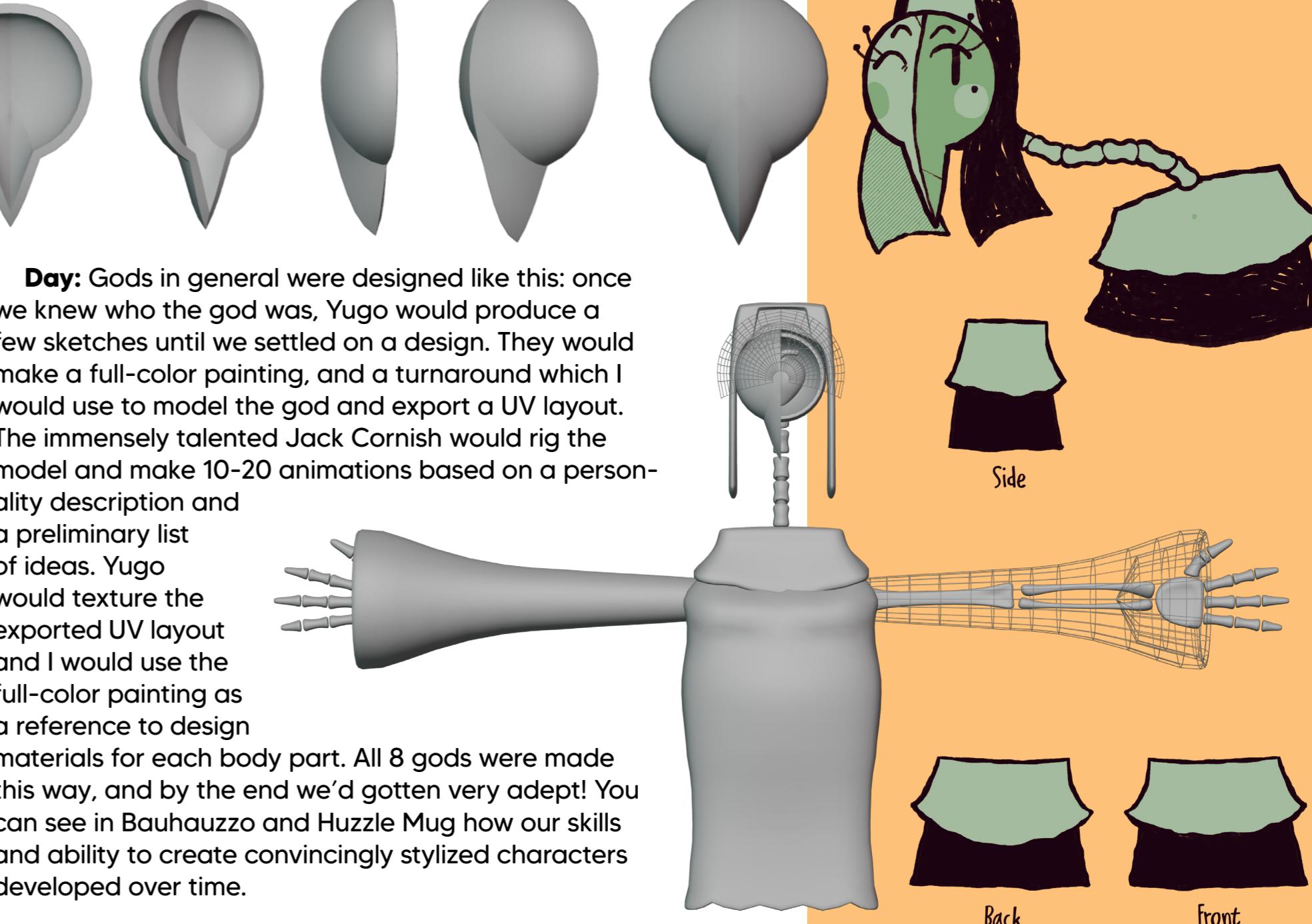
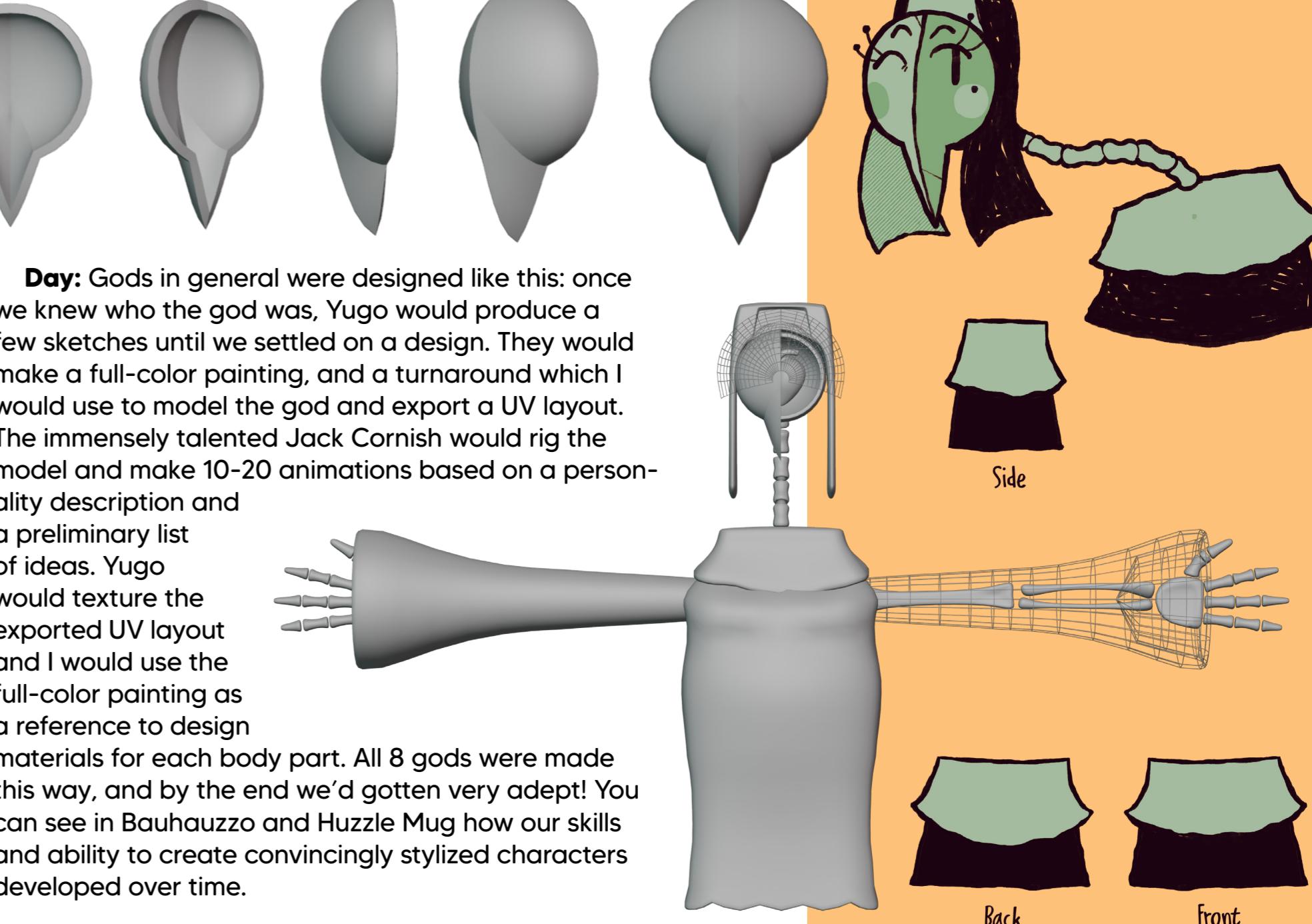
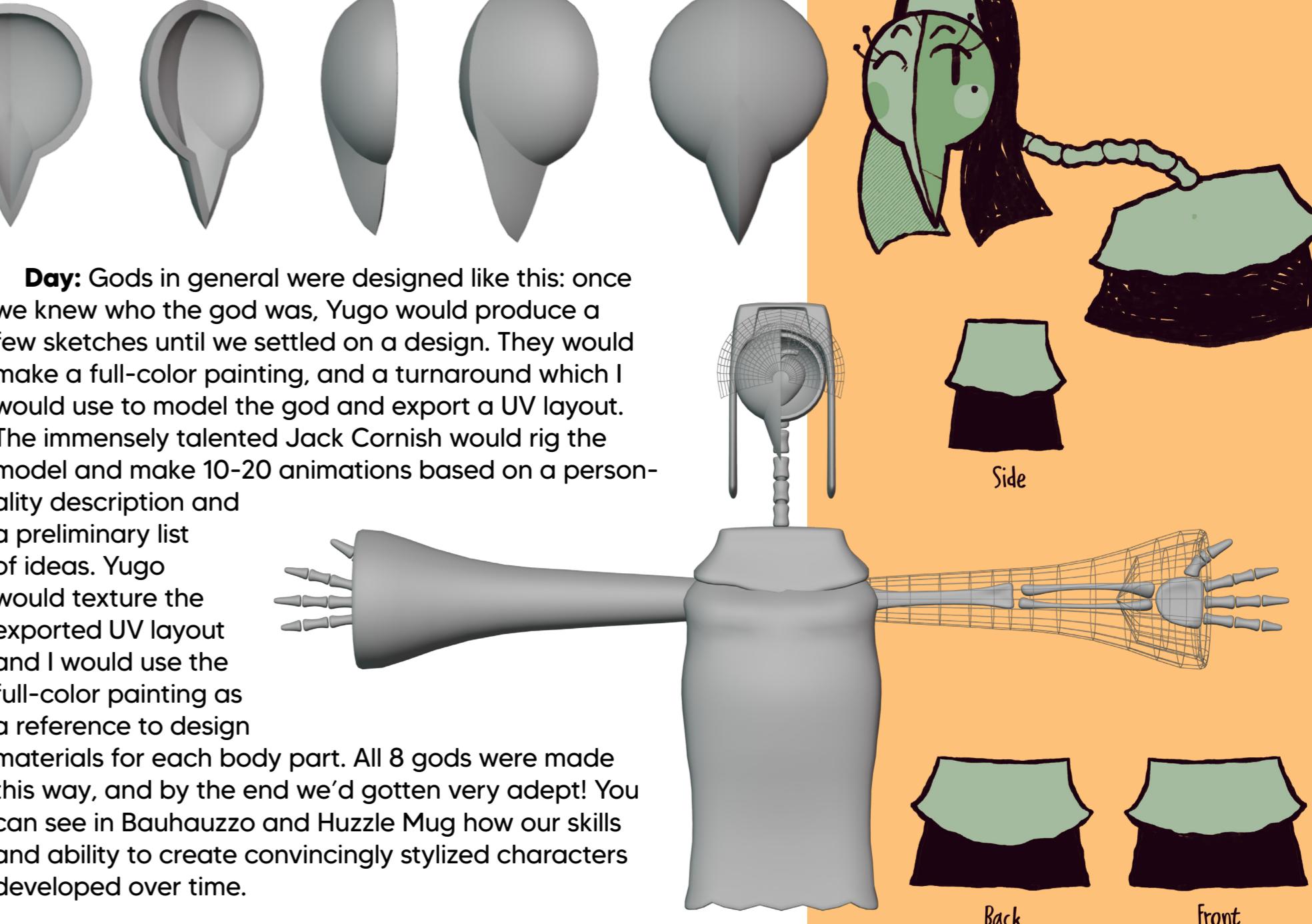
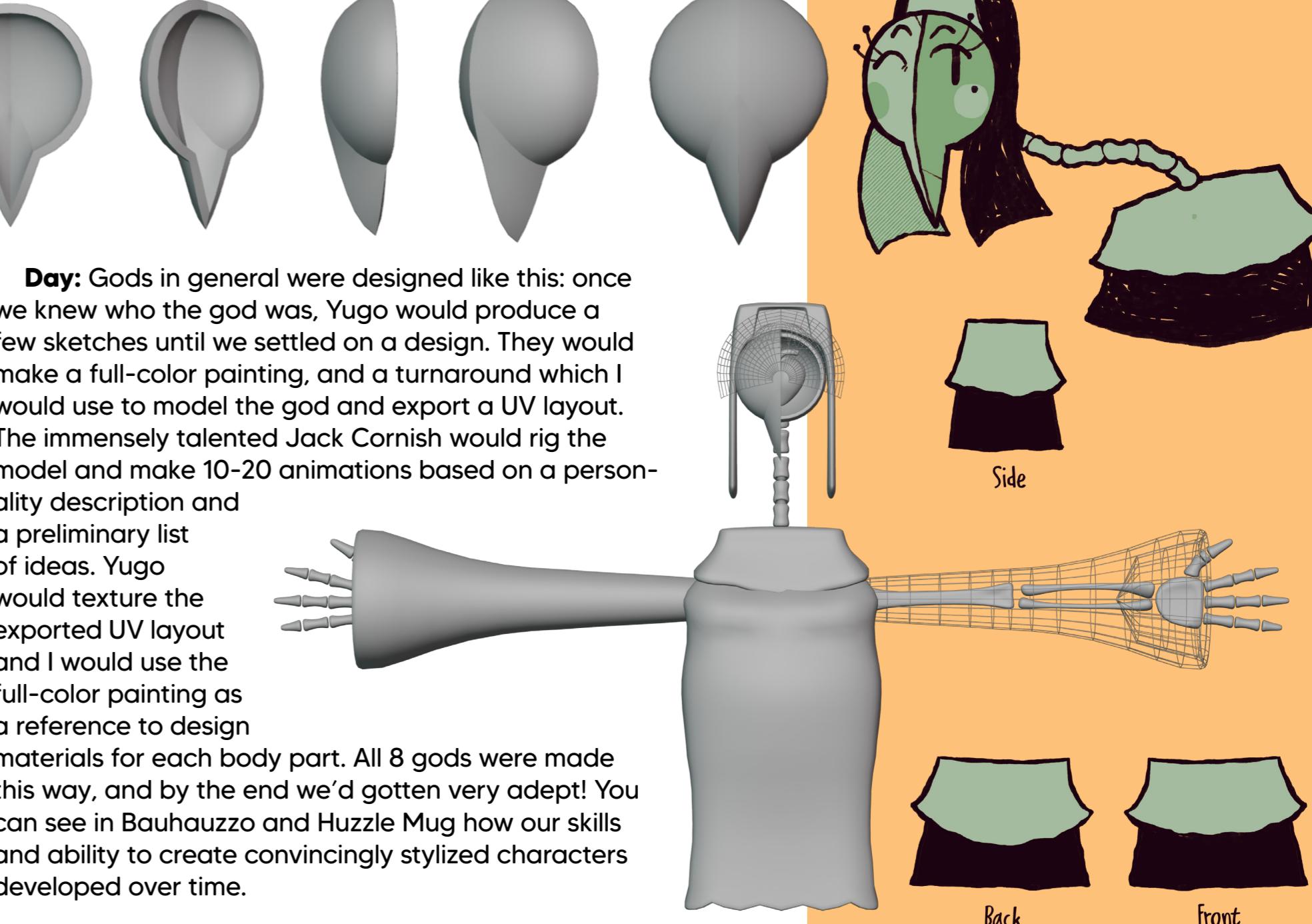
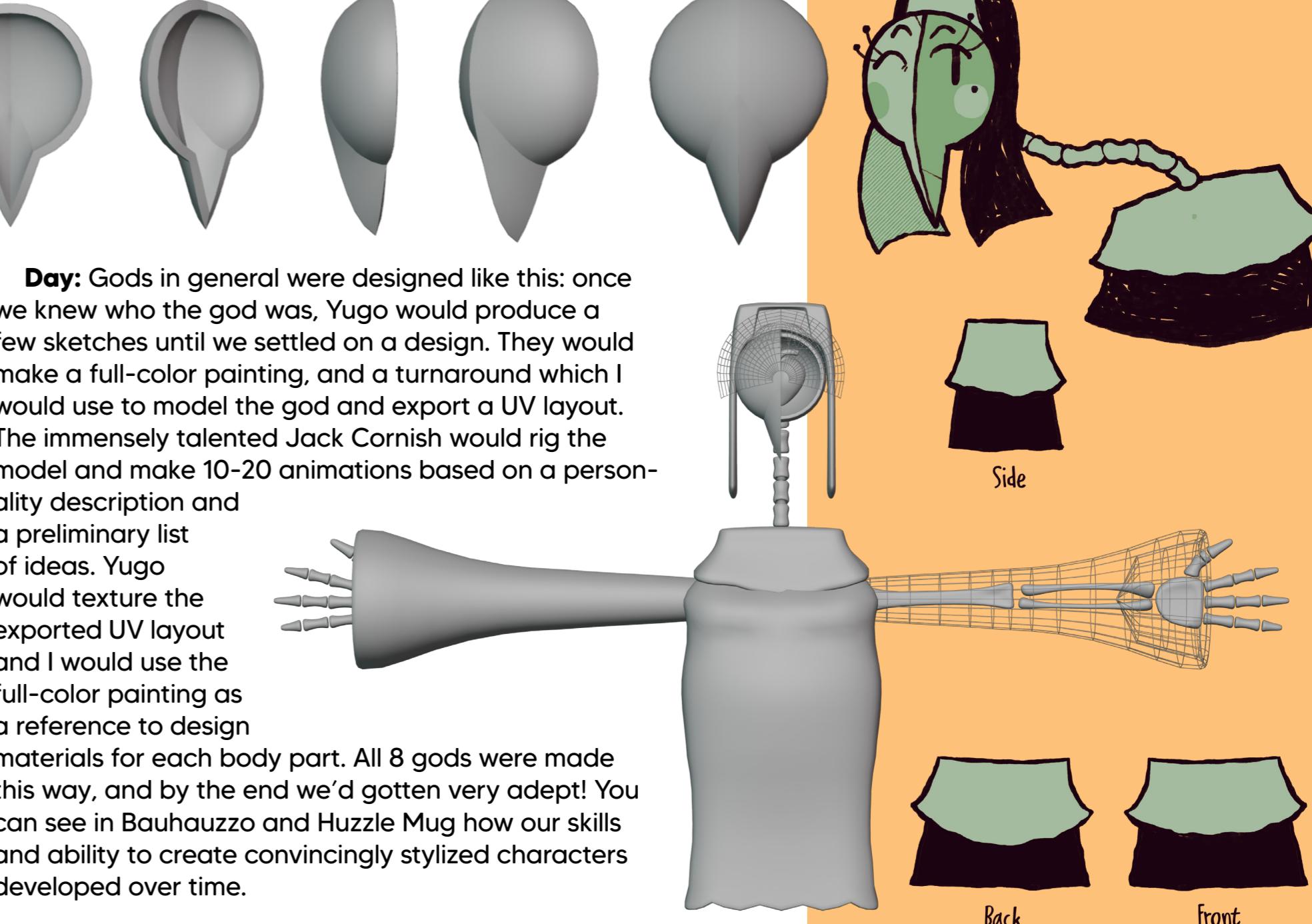
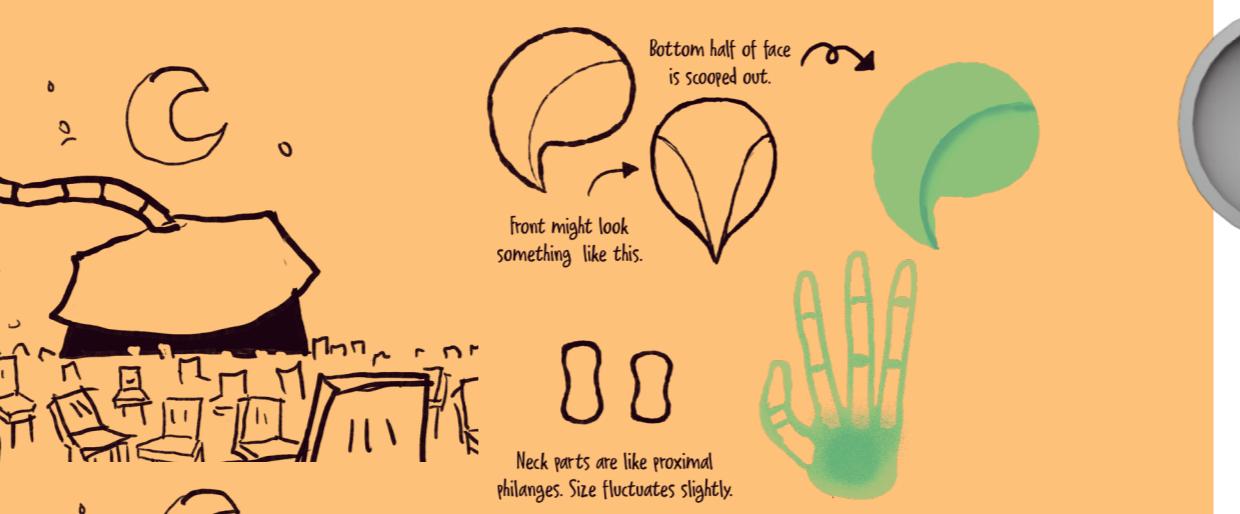
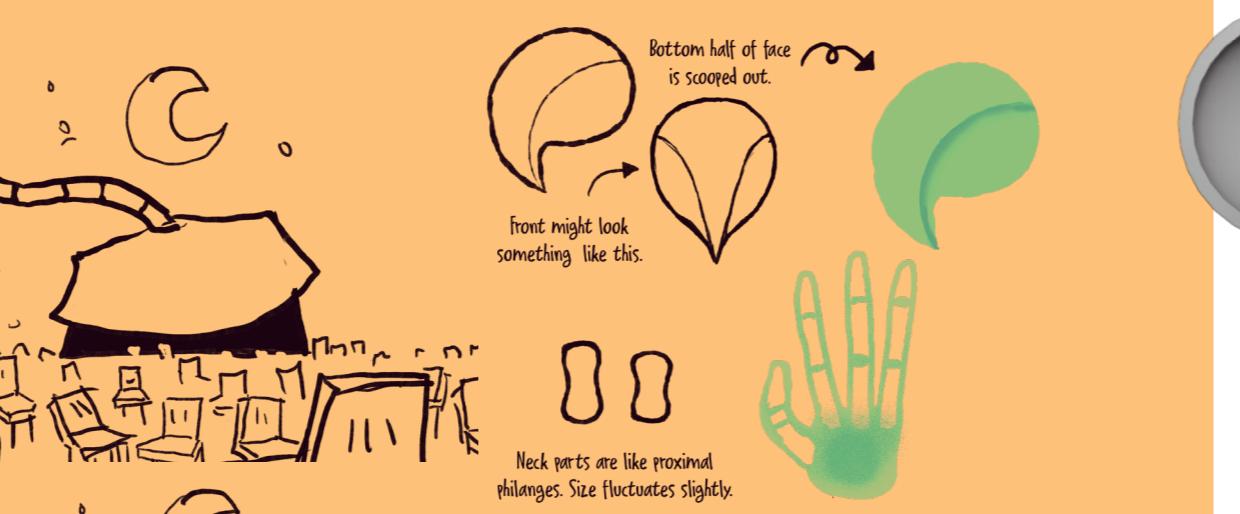
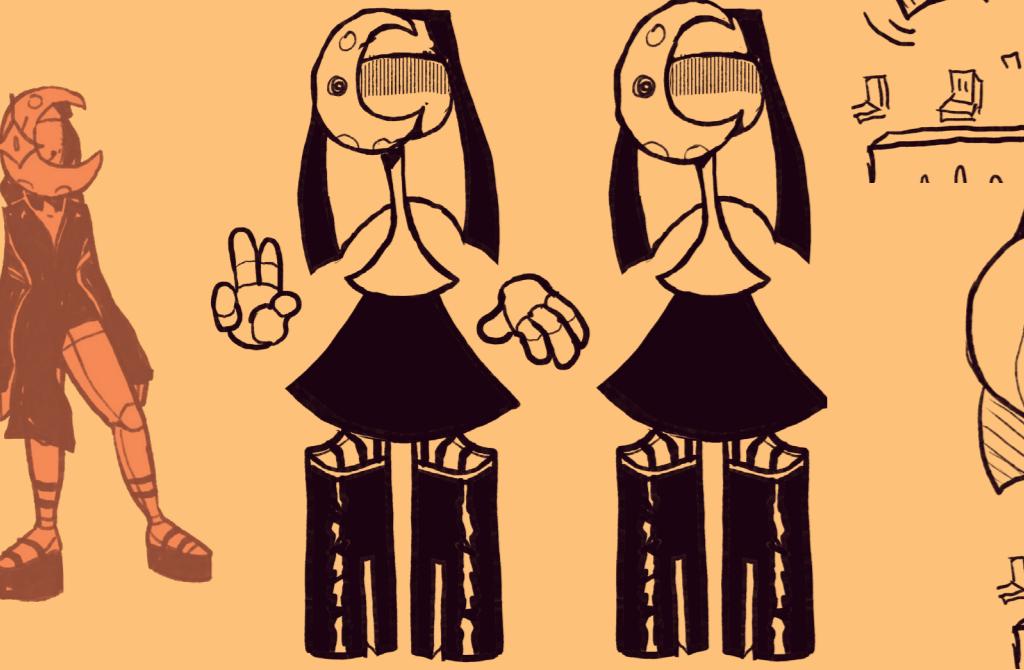
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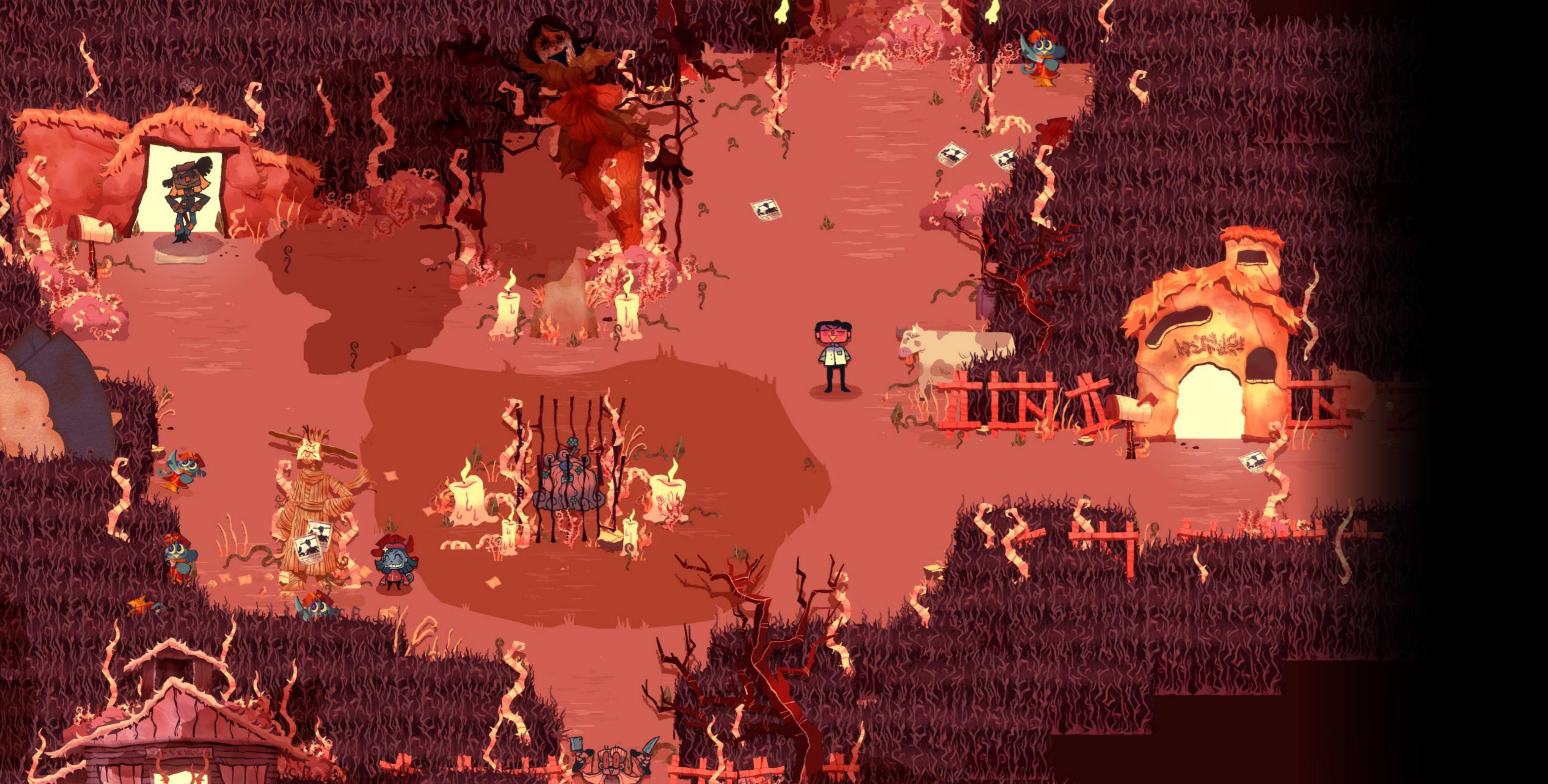






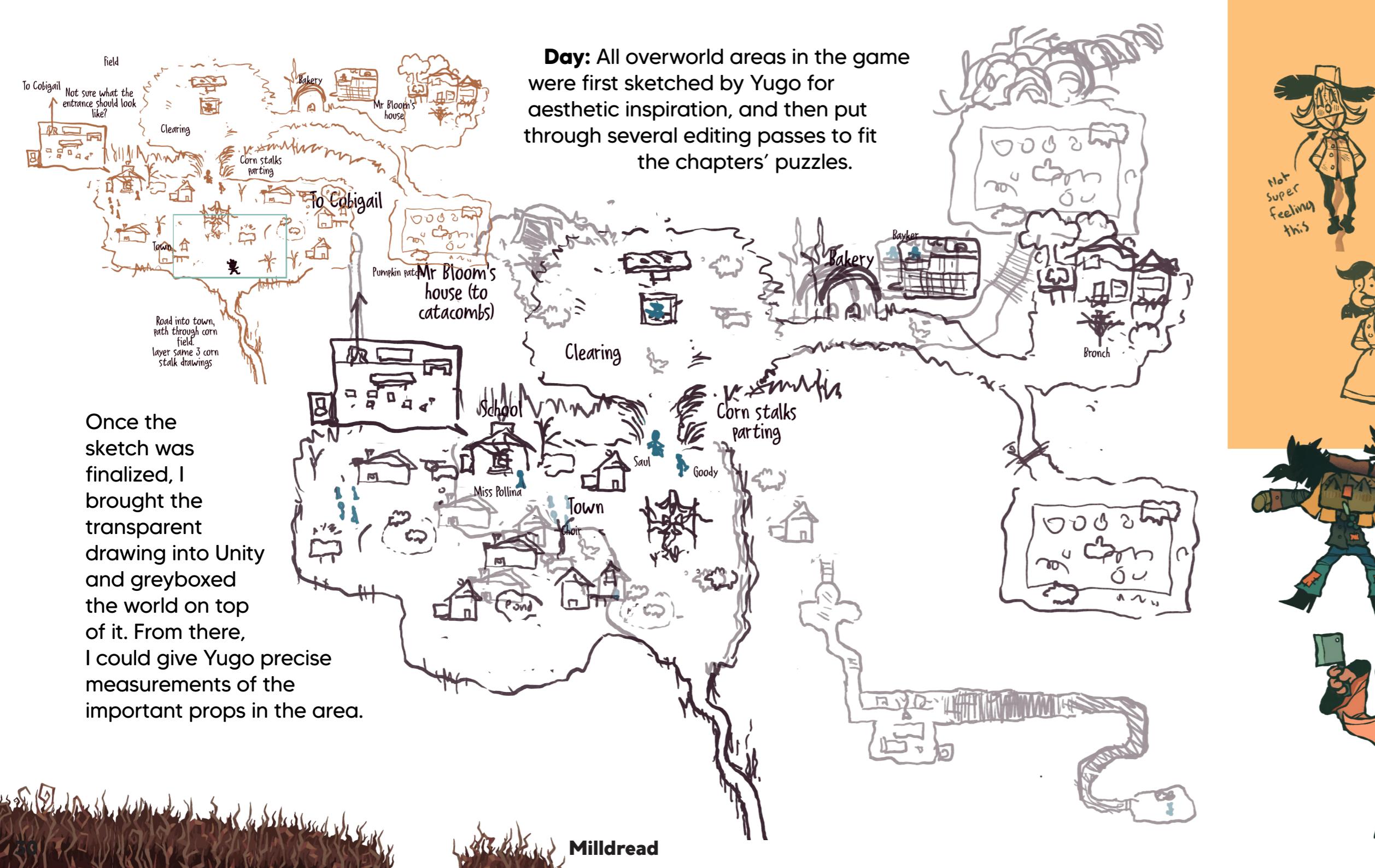
God room is a "sea of chairs". The farther away they get, the closer the chairs get to one another. Big hands emerge from behind the chairs. Note: She should probably be a little smaller in the composition. The "stars" move around like fireflies.





Yugo: Milldread, the town of perpetual sunset. You arrive- it's unbearably hot, the air is still, and not a single soul can stand the sight of one another. The crops are failing, the people are starving, and the only baker in town has a yeast allergy. A tricky god has offered a grisly solution- a blood sacrifice to the feared God of the Harvest, Milldread's patron deity. That can't be right, can it...?

Milldread is reminiscent of an old witch-hunt-era Colonial village. Farmland, farm animals, no electricity, and an air of impenetrable judgment. When conceiving this area, I had Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* in mind- there's even a character named Goody!







Milldread Scenery

Day: There were challenges in getting a real feeling of 3D depth out of only 2D sprites. Small props (like stones and shrubbery) were placed at 45° relative to the ground, perpendicular to the camera; while simple “decal” sprites (scuffs on the ground, pebbles) were layered flat to give the ground texture. Many sprites were arranged together in-engine to give an area a sense of 3D verisimilitude (as with the thorny bush to the left, composed of 9 props and 3 decals)

Chapter 1 walls will be a sequence of normal prop sprites (each showing part of a row of corn) that together form barriers.

Square sprites will combine together to make the rows of corn! Here are the sprites we need:

(10-11 sprites total)

1x base corn row, very plain. Tiles with itself on the left and right

3-4x slight variant corn row. **IMPORTANT:** Start from the base sprite and dont modify the very edges as you work. That way all variants will naturally tile with all others.

2x left-edge of corn row, and 2x right-edge of corn row. Again, to make these, start from the base sprite and only modify one side. That way they are guaranteed to tile with the base sprite AND all its variants.

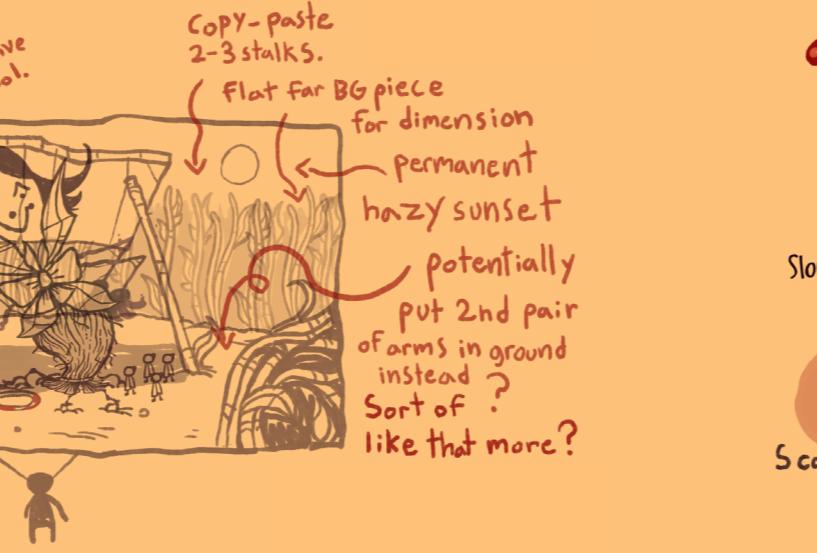
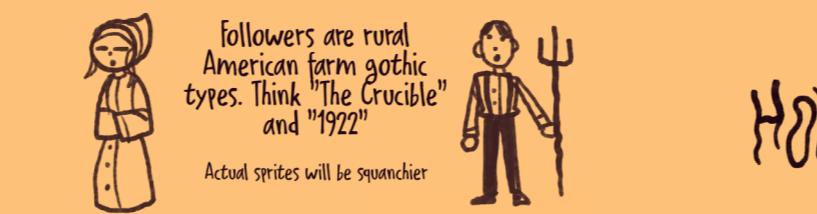
2x stand-alone corn section. This "ends" on both the left and right side. It doesn't tile with anything. It's used for walls that are very thin in the East-West direction, such as the one shown here.

above: Internal technical design document by Day explaining Milldread's cornfield "walls."

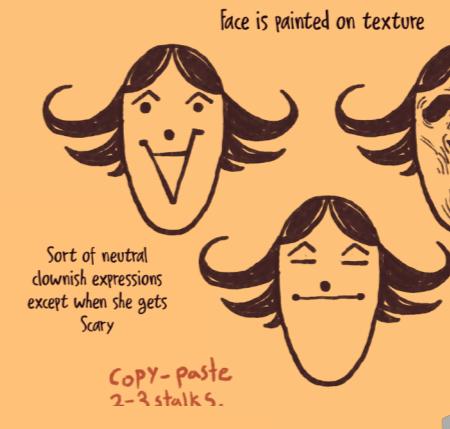
Milldread Scenery

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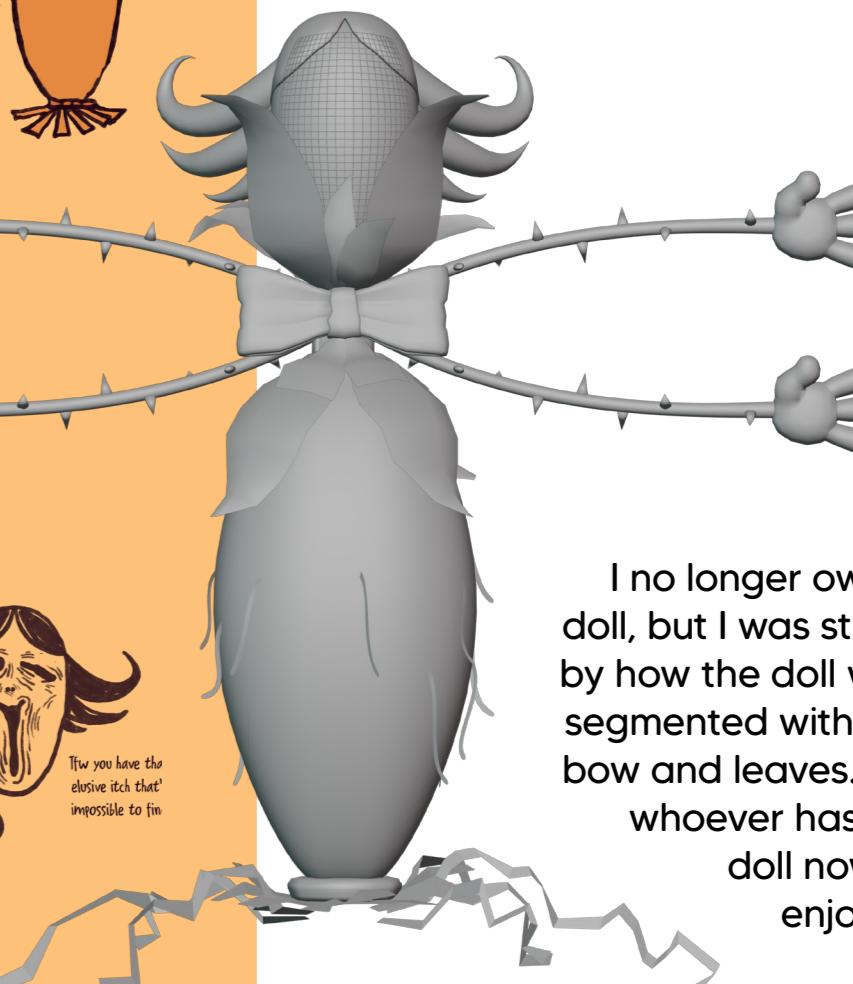




Scale



COPY-paste 2-2 stalks.



Yugo: Cobigail's final design was inspired by a handmade corn husk doll I bought from an antique store when I was a kid. It wasn't mass-produced, just made by some unknown artist having fun.

I no longer own the doll, but I was struck by how the doll was segmented with a big bow and leaves. I hope whoever has that doll now is enjoying her.

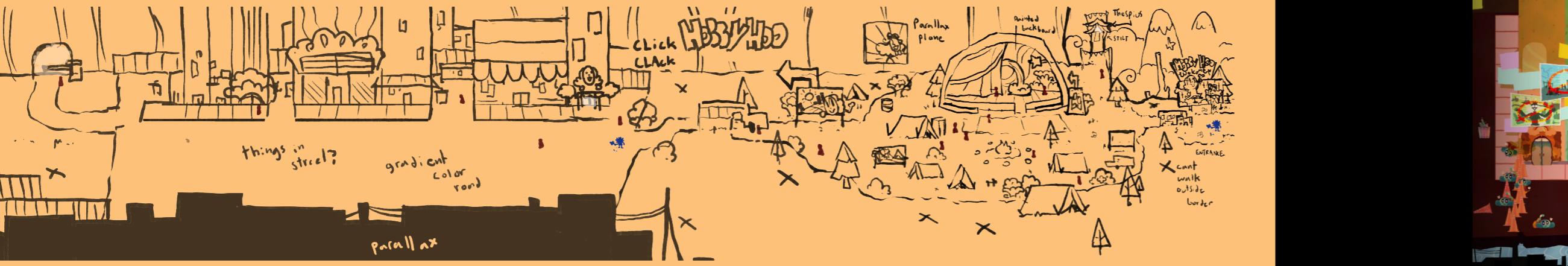




Yugo: Hobbyhoo- the hip happenin' place in The Grove, BURSTING with music, love, and joy- or not. A place once alive with inspiration has now been SAPPED DRY. "OH PARTNER MINE!", an episodic epic written by none other than Hobbyhoo's two patron gods has suddenly gone completely stale, so stale that nobody wants to create anything anymore. Just WHAT is at the root of this problem...? It's King again, isn't it? Yeah, it's King.

Hobbyhoo is inspired by, well, Hollywood- more specifically its media shift during the 1960s-70s. The area is split up into two halves: The Sunrise Strip- obviously analogous to the real Sunset Strip- and Hobbyhoo Hills- analogous to Laurel Canyon, the gathering ground for creatives of the hippie variety. During this era, as a result of the stuffy traditional culture of the 50s bleeding into ever-rising anti-war sentiment from the Vietnam War, creatives felt emboldened to 'stick it to the man'. This in turn manifested as defying norms in film, music, visual art, fashion, and gender roles. People started to care less about what was palatable and marketable to the public, and more what THEY truly wanted to say and just what was enjoyable to them... But of course, corporate overhead, stuck in tradition, pushed back and many truly inspired (and Hollywood funded) projects came out stripped of their personality and heart. This didn't stop the underground scene of course, which FLOURISHED through word-of-mouth without corporate meddling. You can see how a lot of this real-world conflict inspired and manifested into this chapter!

opposite: Final layout sketch for HobbyHoo, and corresponding game screenshot
below: various in-progress layout sketches

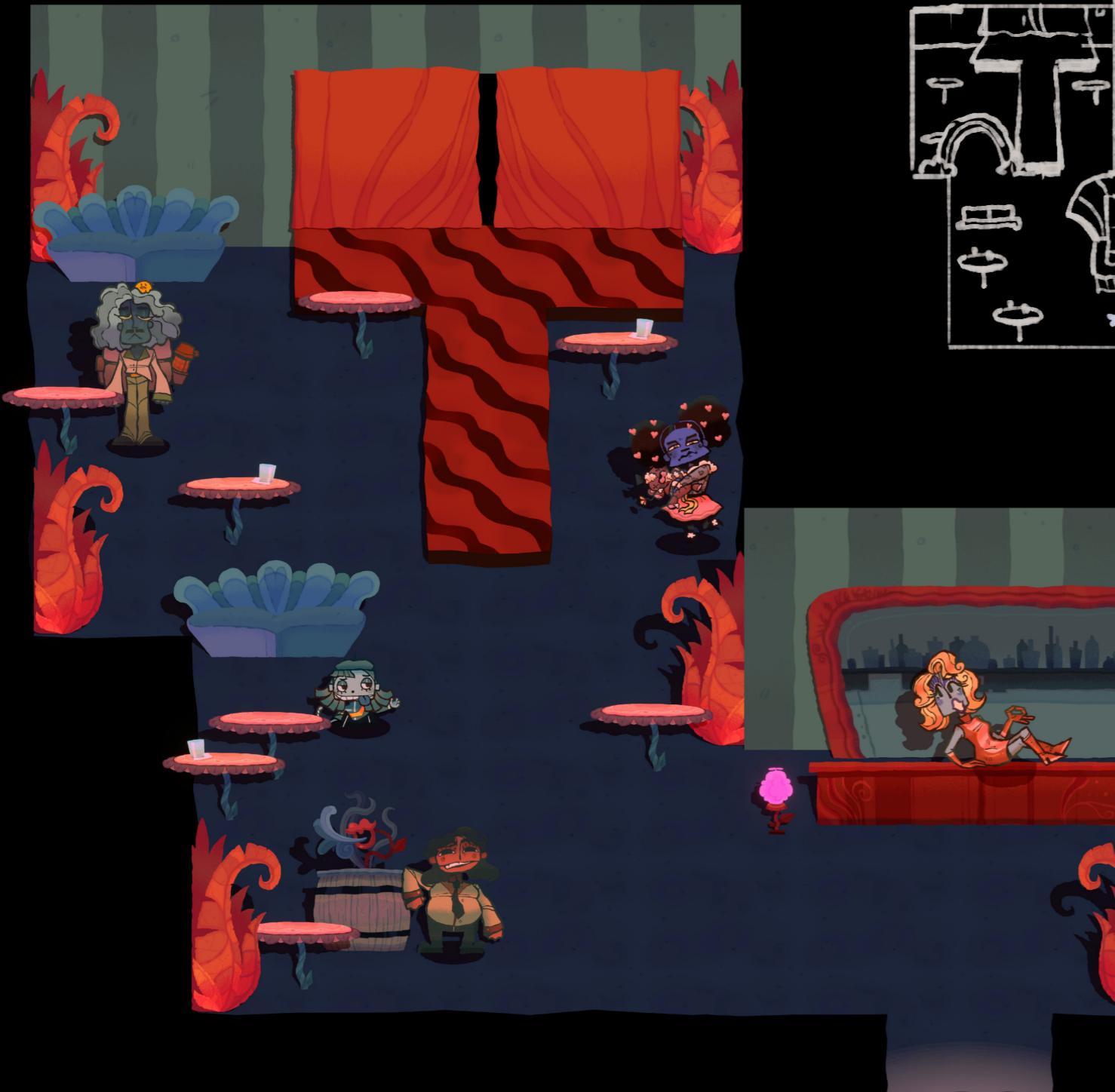


Day: Most of the design iterations in HobbyHoo were concerned with horizontal compression, making the area feel large and varied without losing walkability. Changing music and scenery as the player moves between areas ultimately helped make the two halves of HobbyHoo feel distinct.



Hobby Hoo







Yugo: One visual inspiration was the design collective The Fool, started by Marijke Koger in the late 1960s. Their murals remain in Los Angeles and London to this day. Many Hobbyhoo residents sport garb inspired by The Fools' handcrafted-fashion, most notably Styella, Byella, and Feldley, the stars of "OH PARTNER MINE!"

HobbyHoo Characters



HobbyHoo Characters

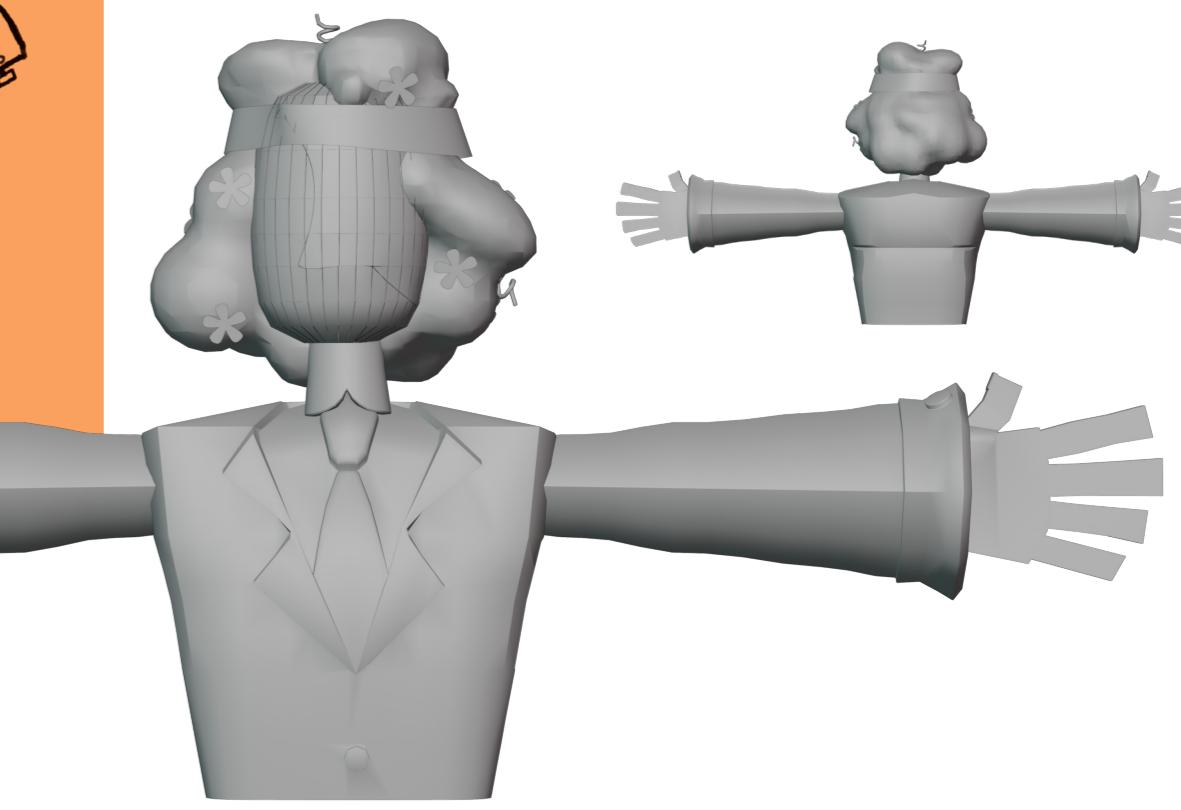




Yugo: Thespian Green, visually, is very inspired by 1960s musician & archivist Tiny Tim- from the hair to the suit. Traditionally, Tiny Tim wore tweed 'gauche' suits in all performances and media appearances. Nothing about this man was traditional, from his fashion, to his bizarre falsetto musical stylings. TV hosts and media reviewers alike paraded him as a laughing stock, behind his back and to his face- but he didn't care, he just wanted to have fun making his music, and loved being the anomaly that he was.



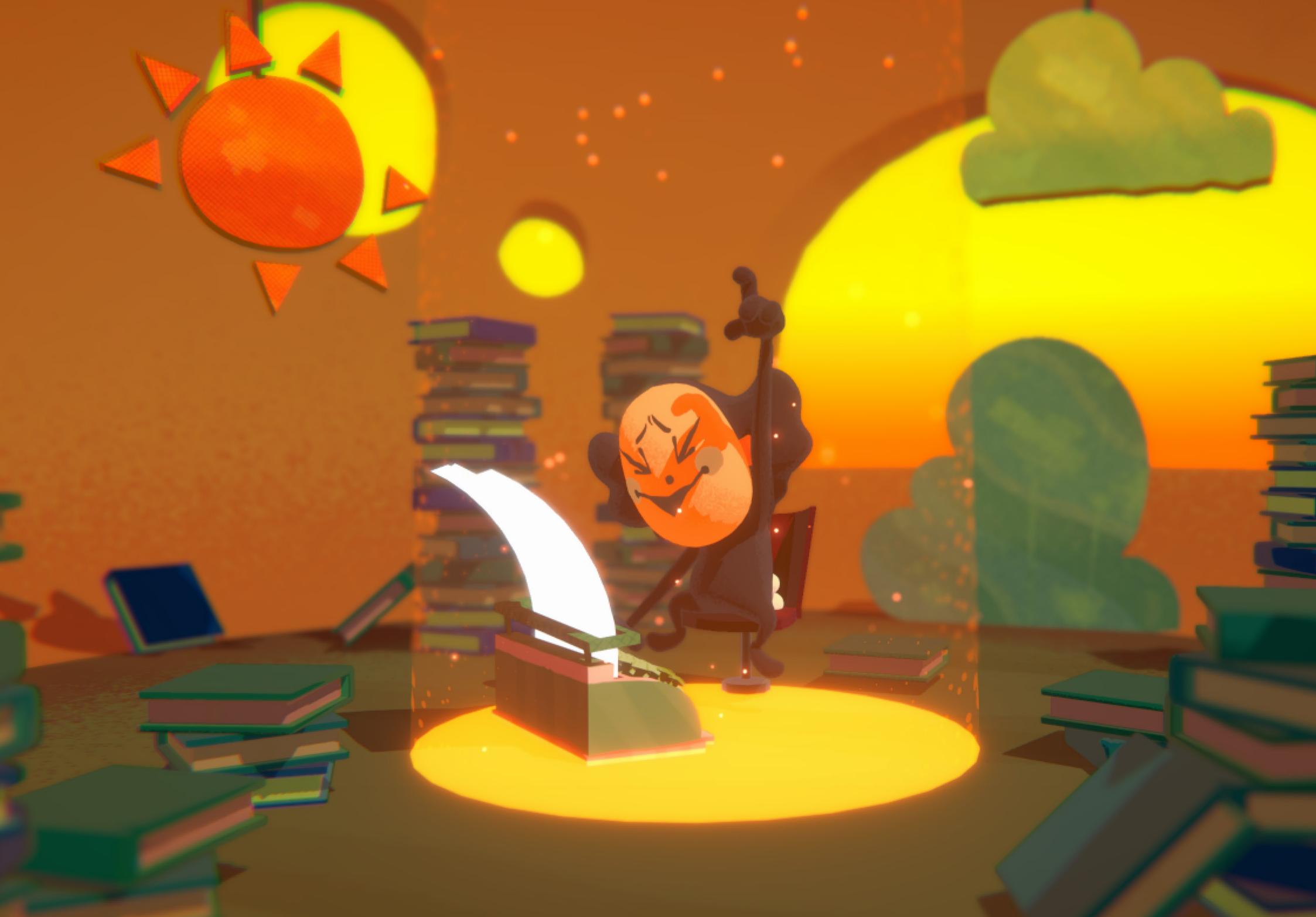
Thespian

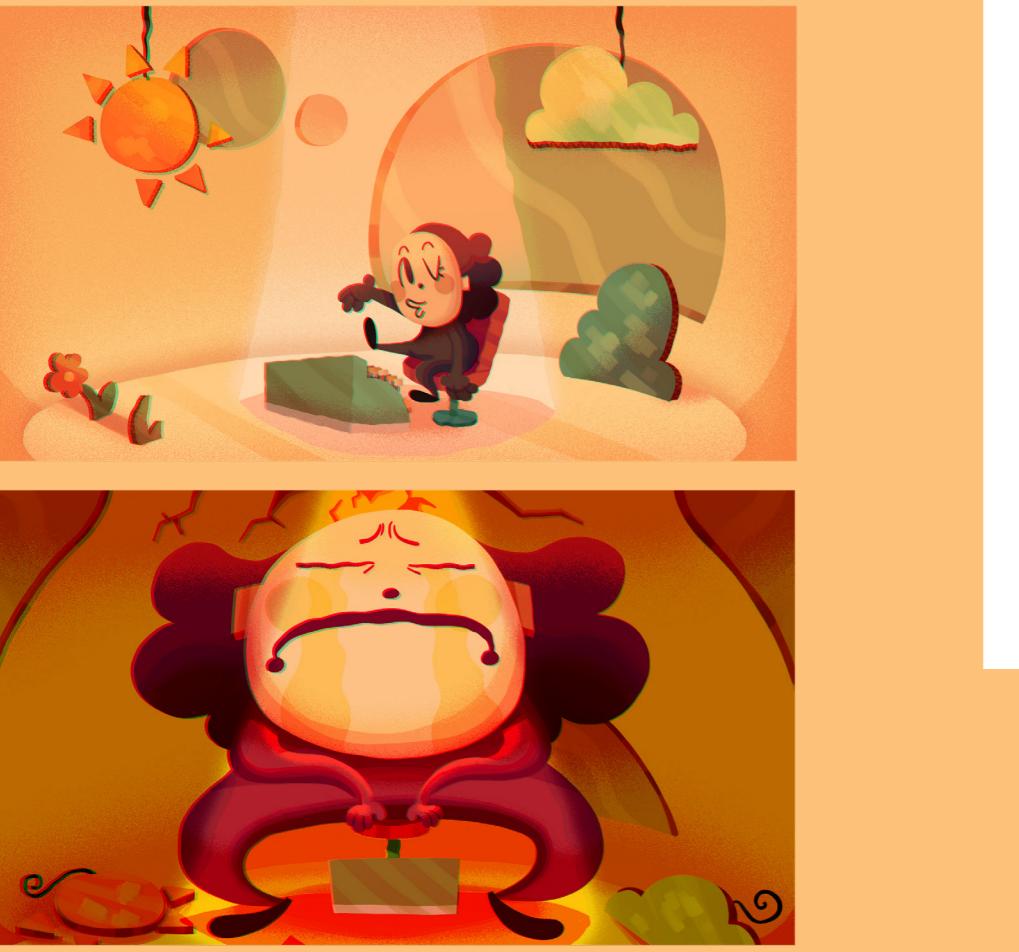


Thespian

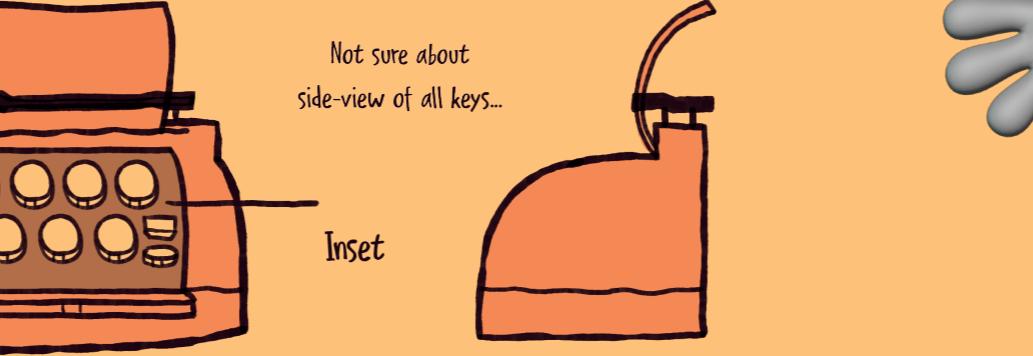
Day: Thespian was the first god designed, before any of the game's story was in place. His design served as a test of what was possible to create in our design pipeline.

Thespian's floating background hands were originally going to use sign language to spell out words relevant to his dialogue. Ultimately, though, it was out of scope.





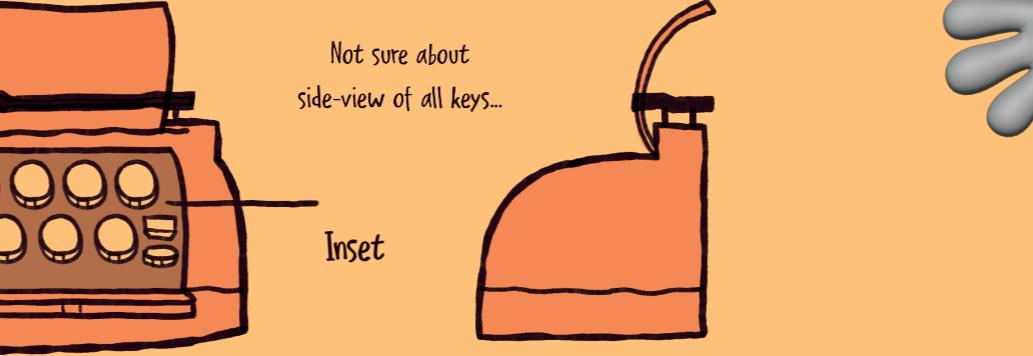
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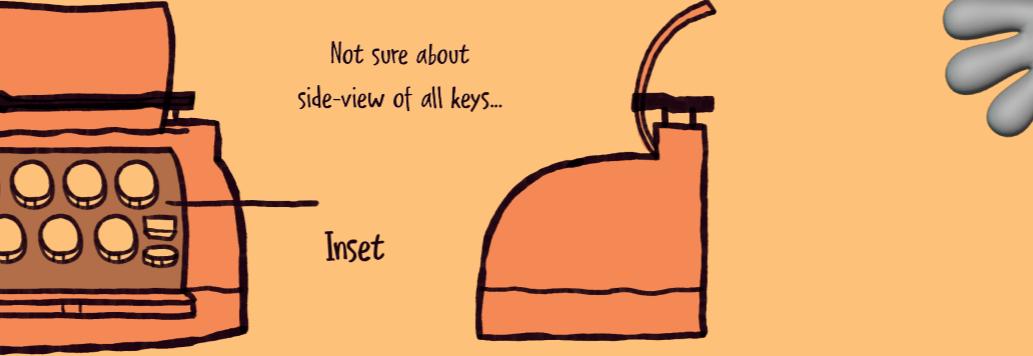
"Georgia" The Typewriter



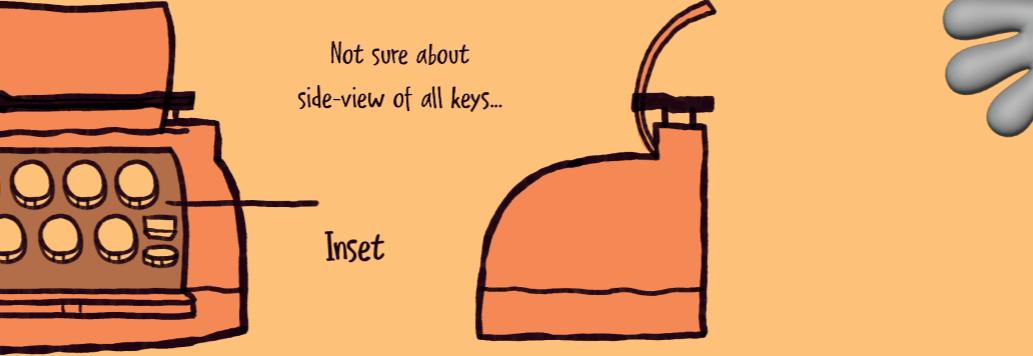
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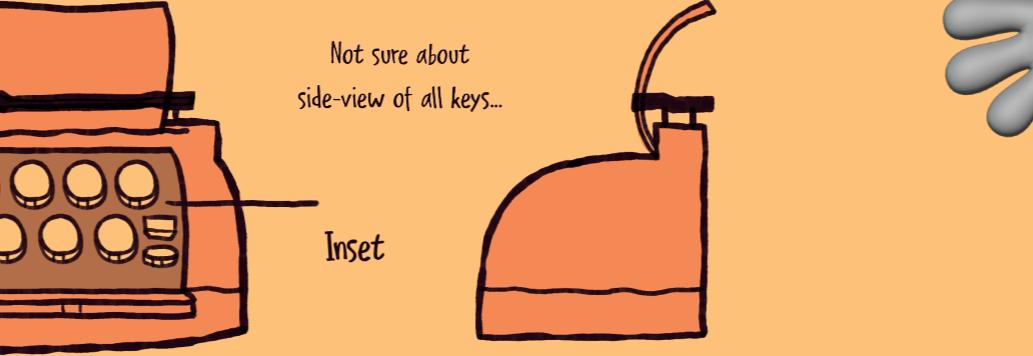
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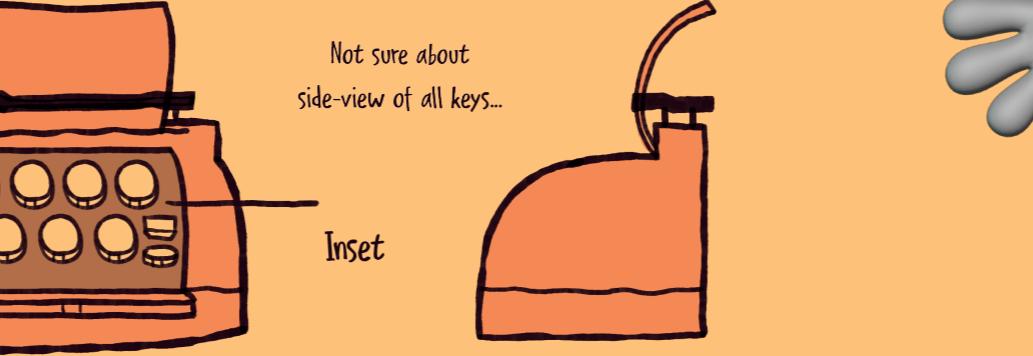
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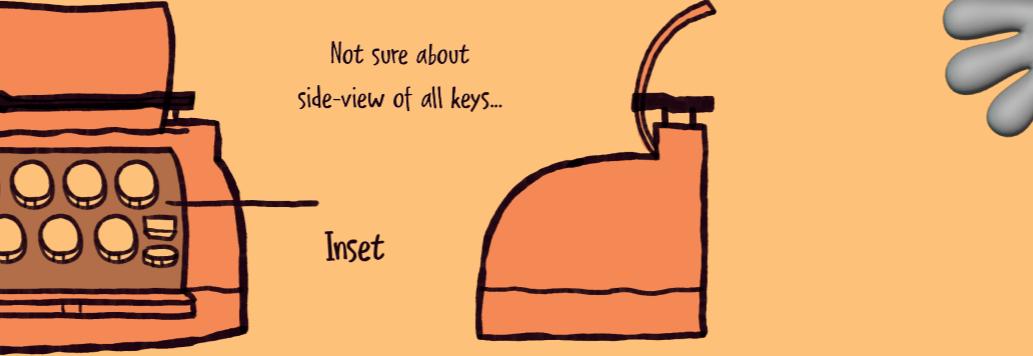
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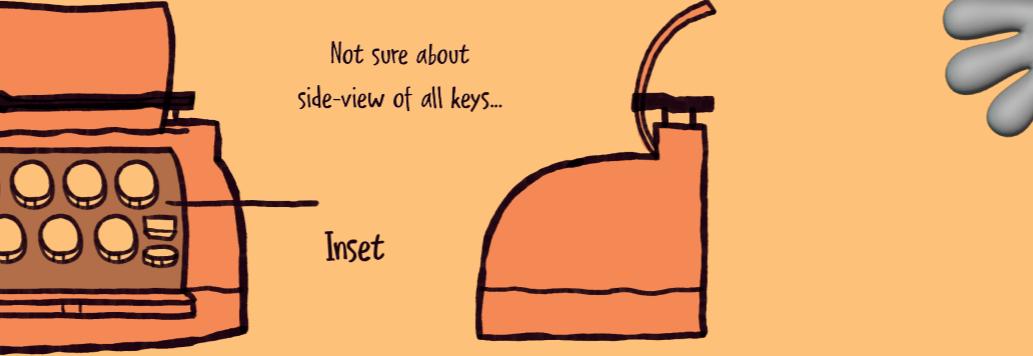
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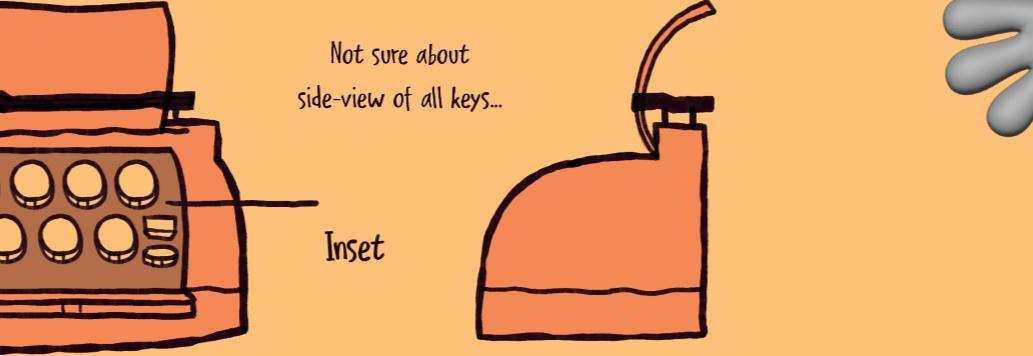
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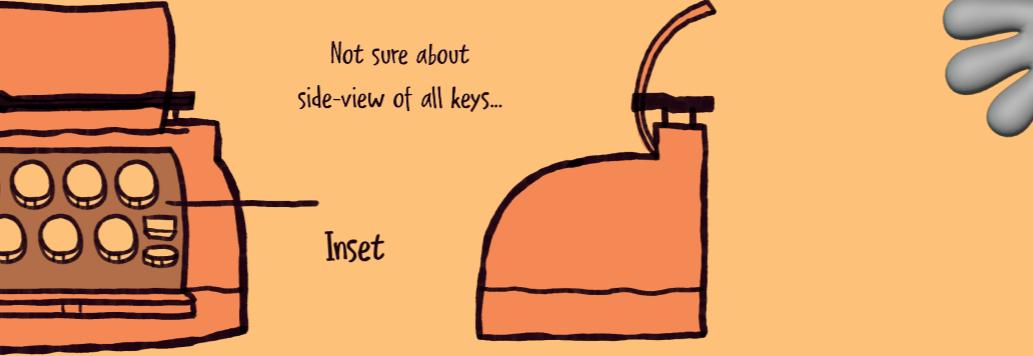
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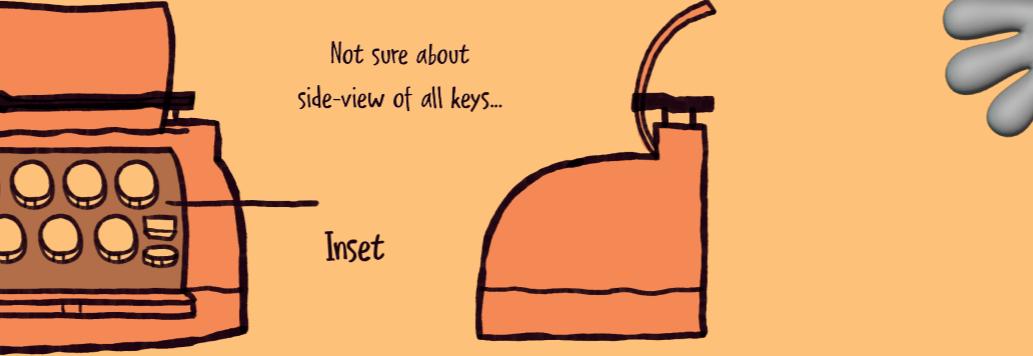
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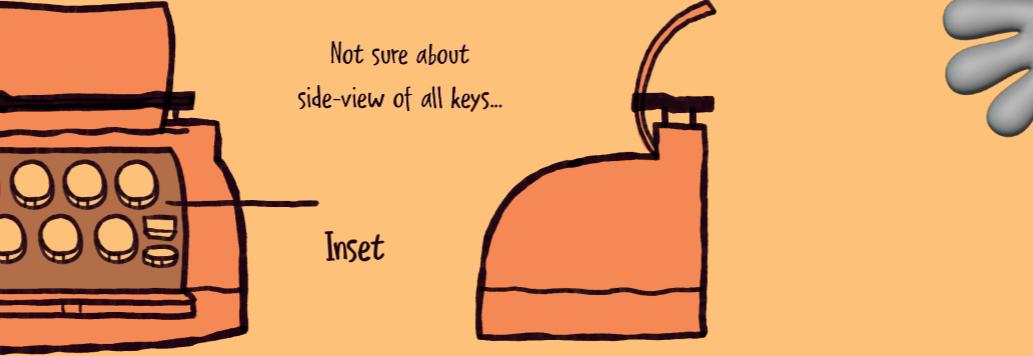
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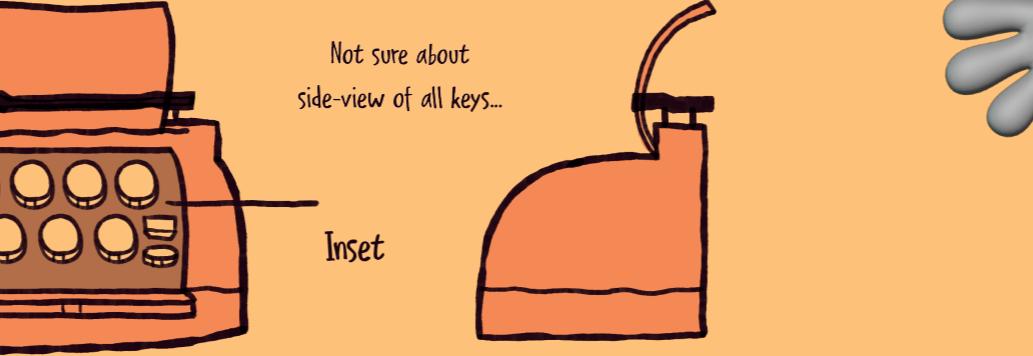
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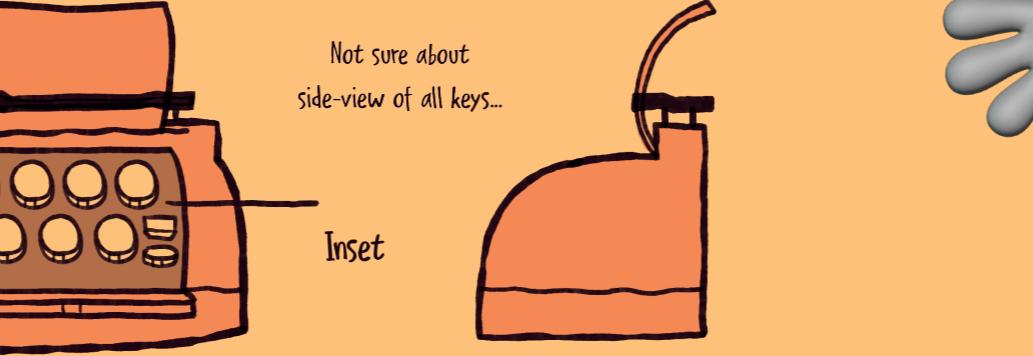
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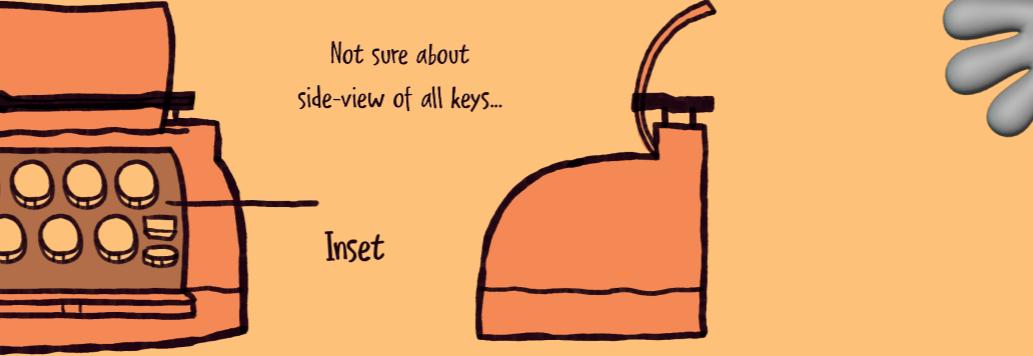
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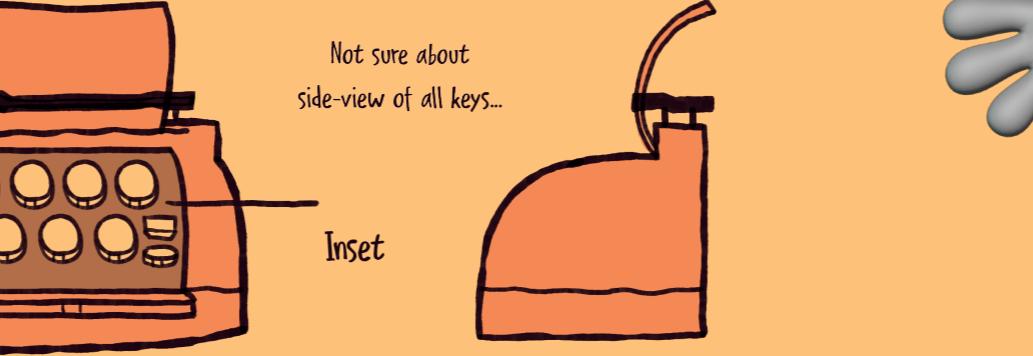
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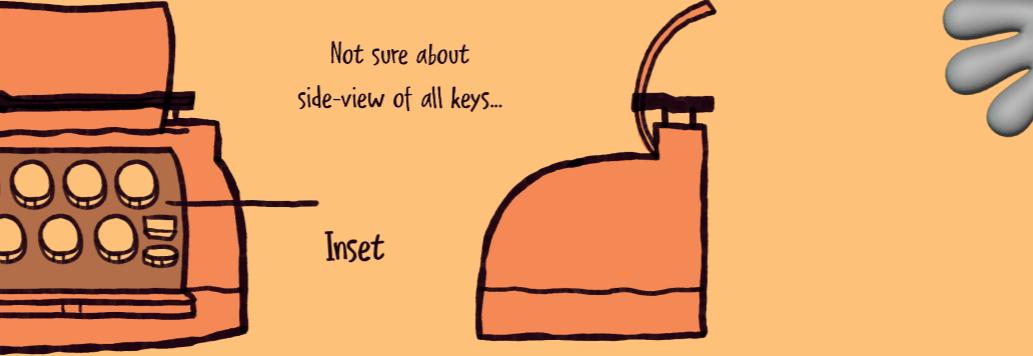
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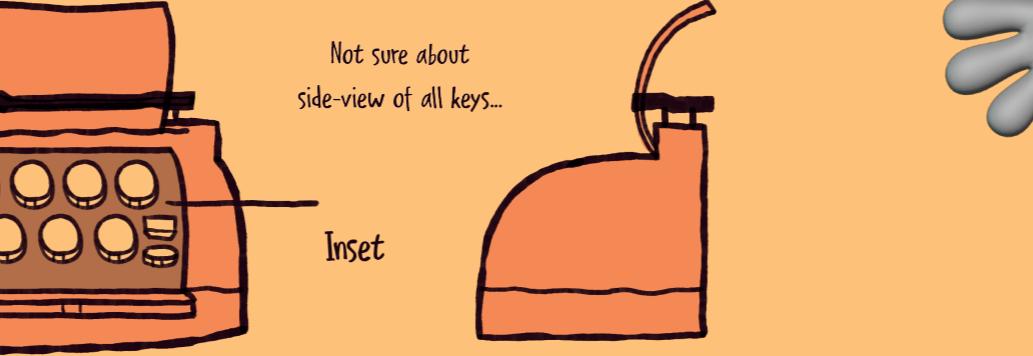
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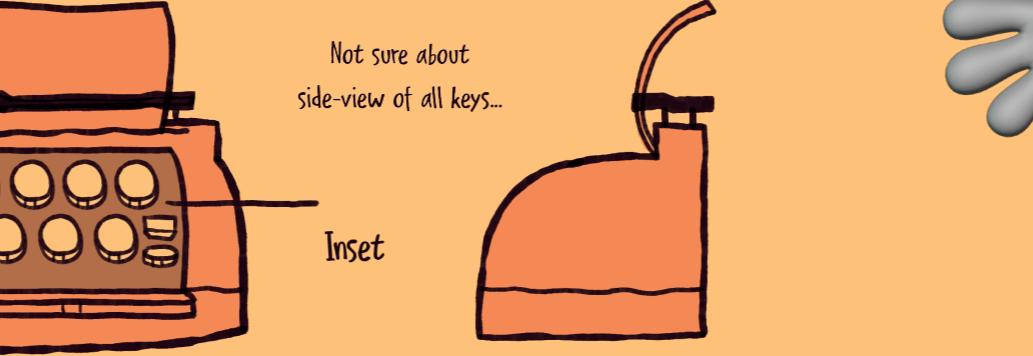
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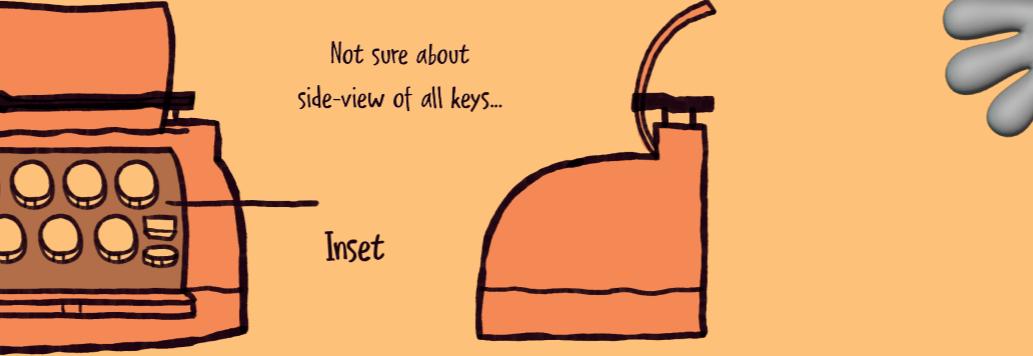
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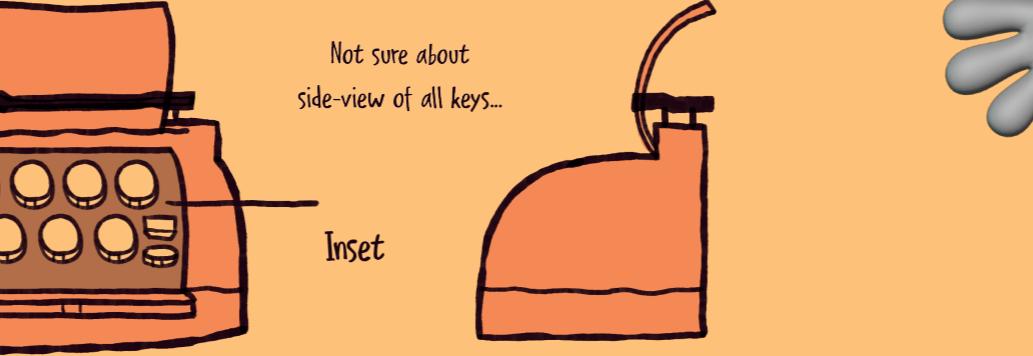
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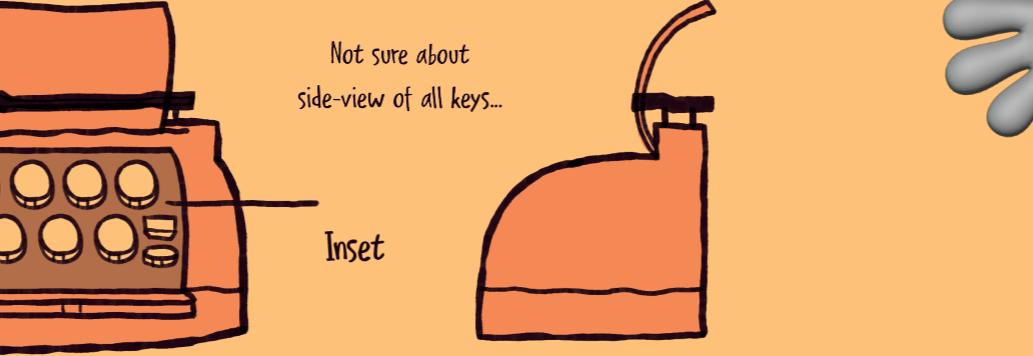
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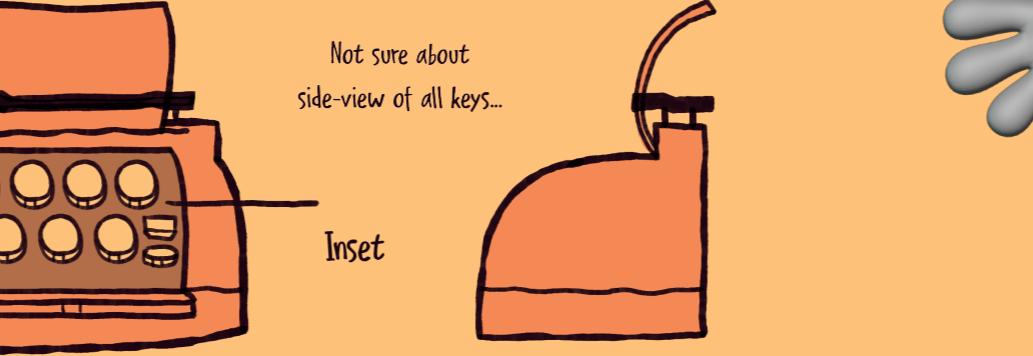
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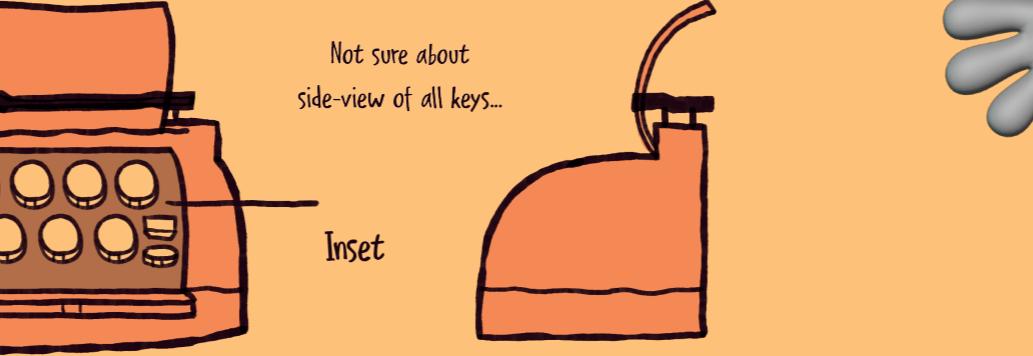
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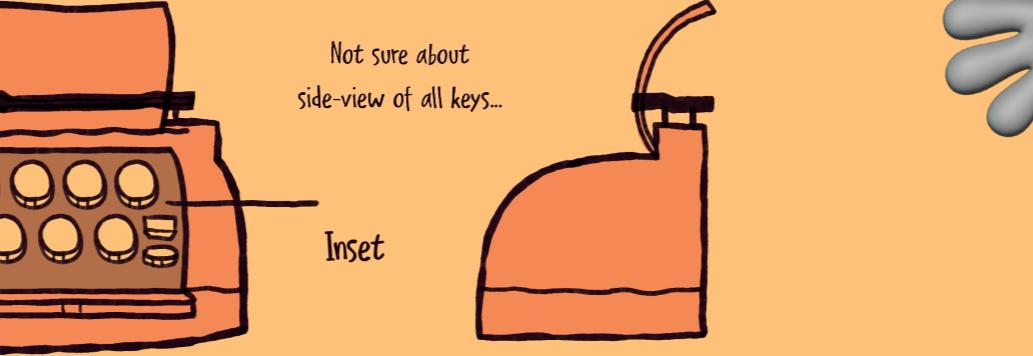
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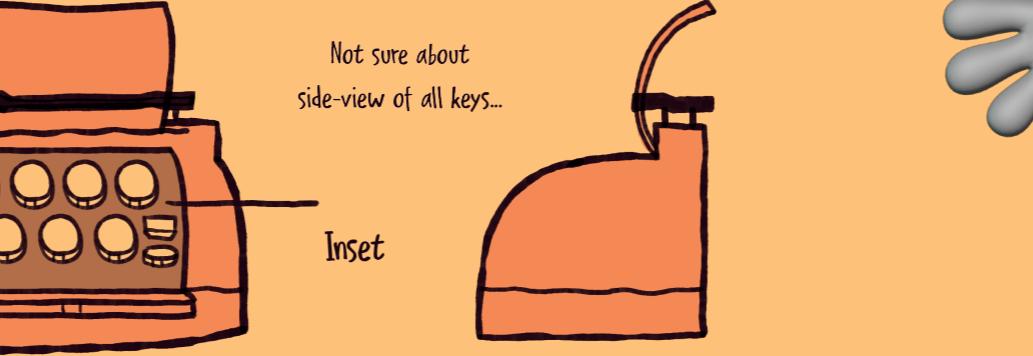
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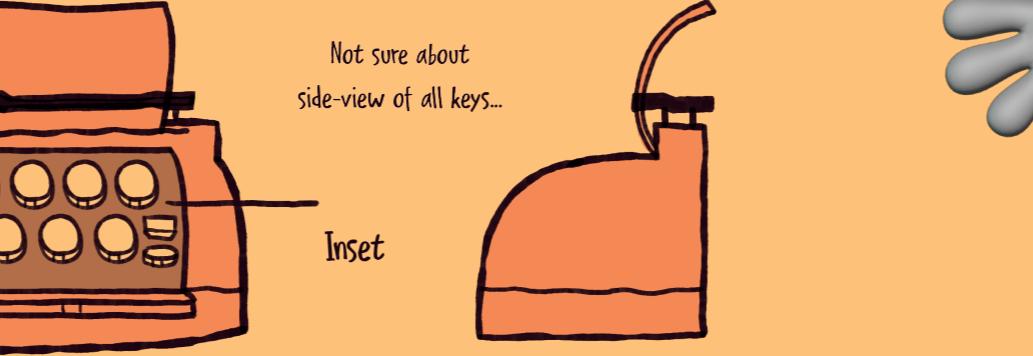
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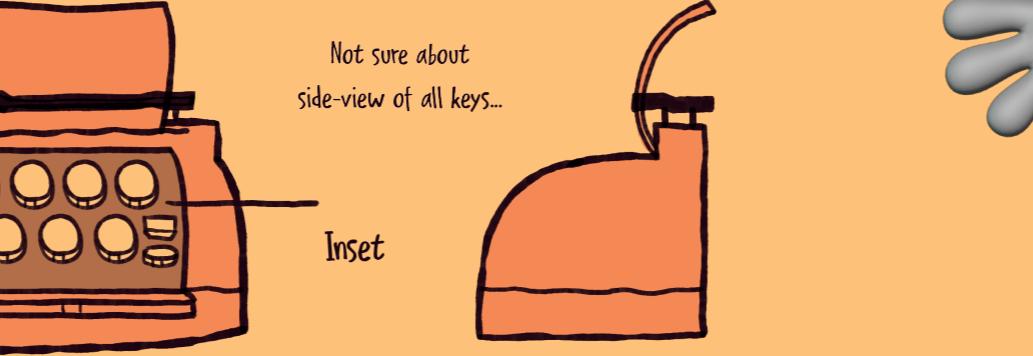
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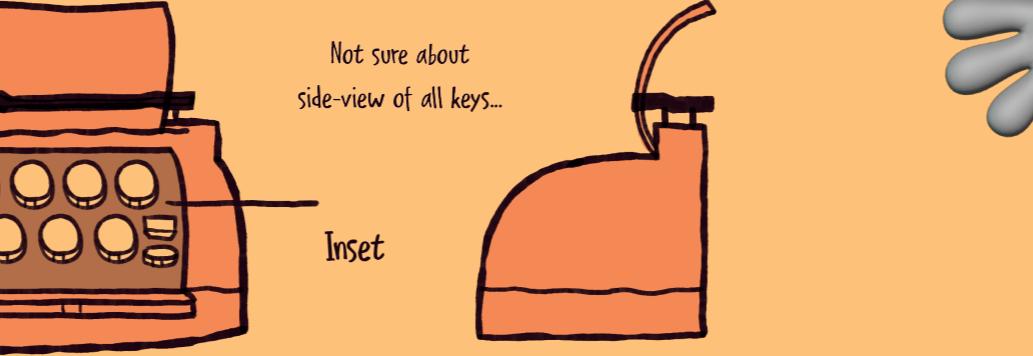
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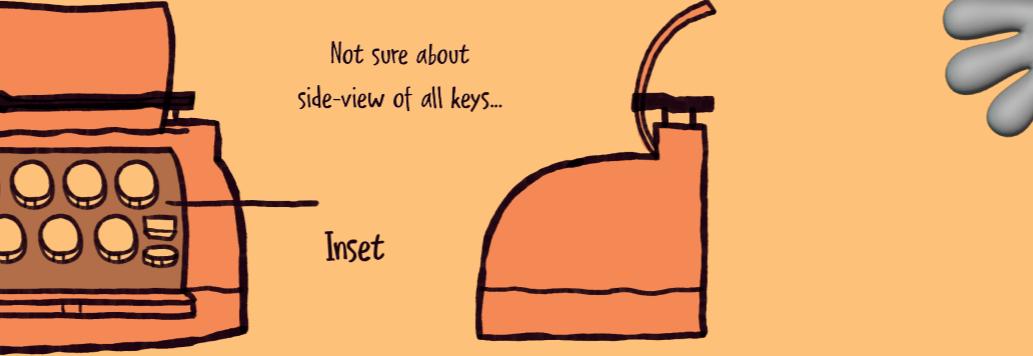
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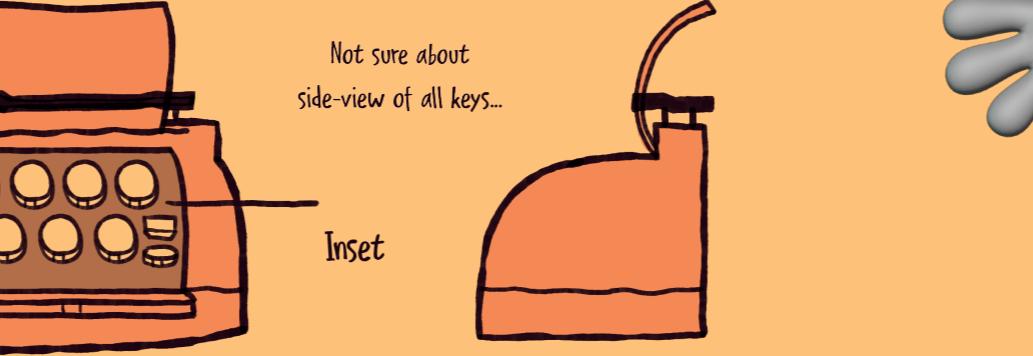
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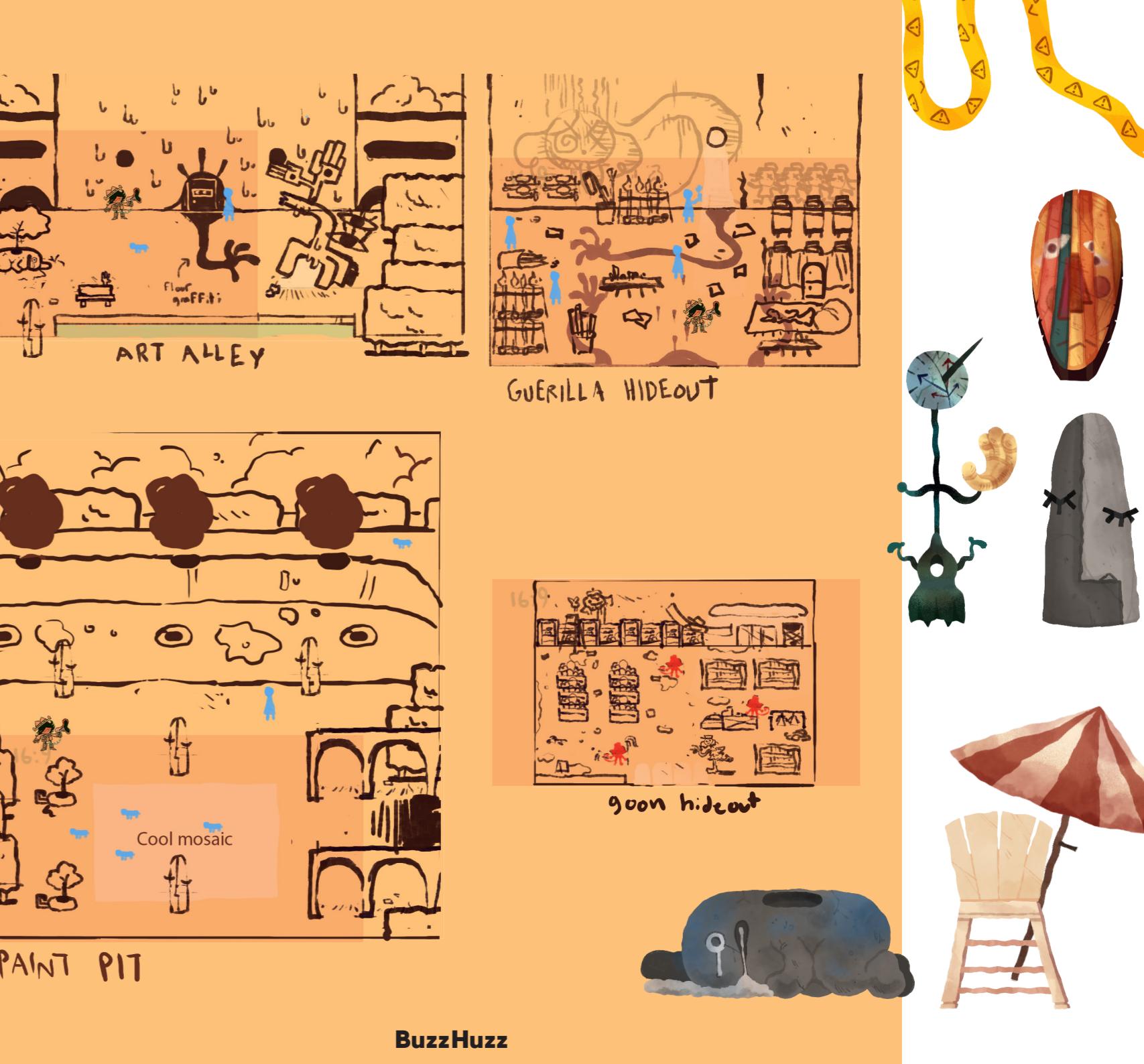
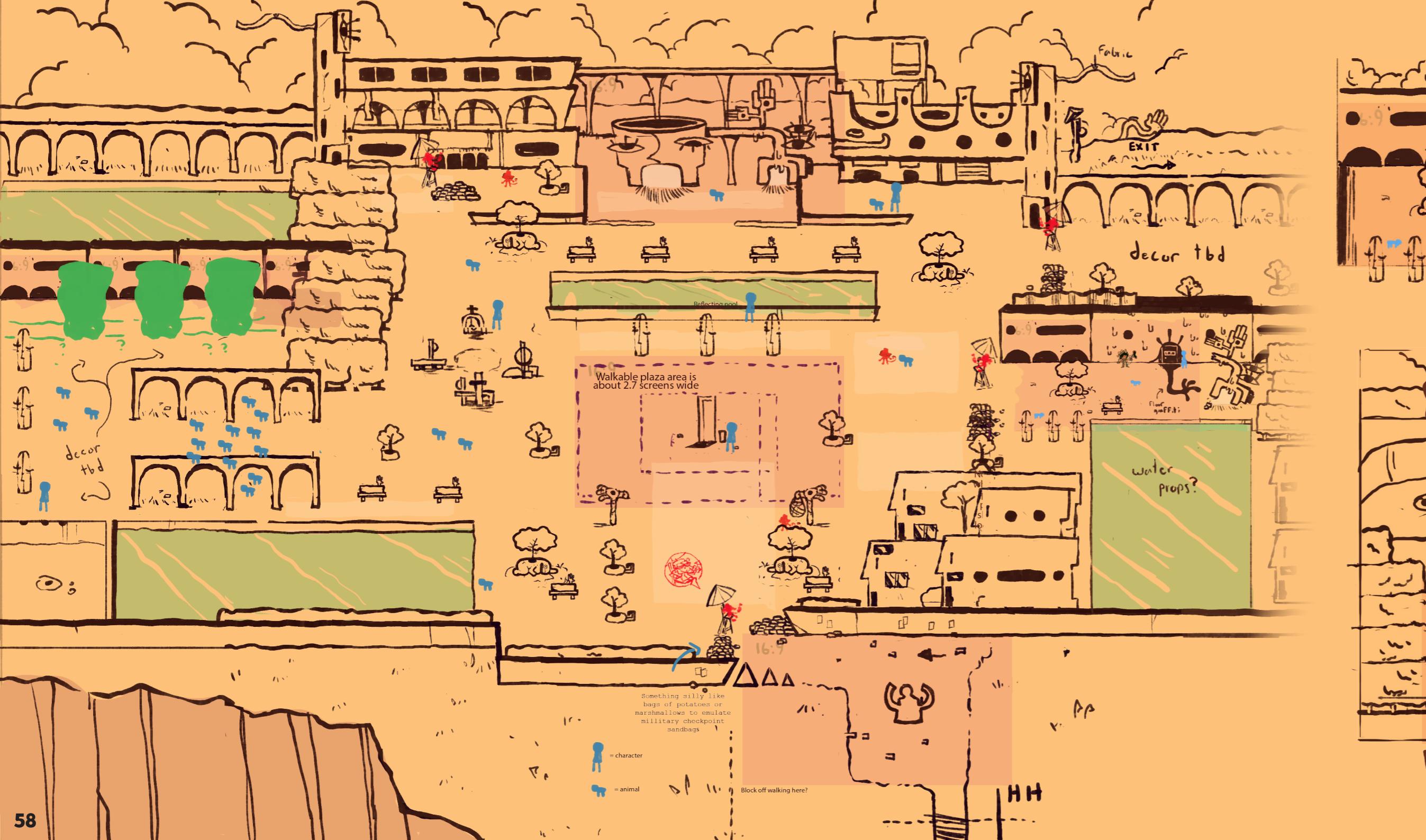


Day: BuzzHuzz was imagined as an early-20th century Italian style plaza- Piazza Navona or the like. The chapter needed a backdrop of a historically innovative city (fitting of Huzzle Mug, god of invention) still rooted enough in tradition that its creative spirit is susceptible to being crushed by conservative fundamentalism. Chapter 4 of Great God Grove is meant to evoke the rise of fascism in Italy ahead of the second world war- and how art and free expression in particular acted as ideological scapegoats for the NFP and NSDAP.

Great God Grove imagines the fascist suppression of free expression as a war that can be won.

Yugo: The stoic, fresh stylings of German-born Bauhaus architecture and the surreal dreamscapes of Yume Nikki helped craft the look of Buzzhuzz. Smooth, blocky buildings imbued with surreal imaginative abstractions represent what Buzzhuzz is all about- the unity between innovation and tradition, how a healthy future cannot exist without the two working in harmony.

Both Bauhaus stylings and surrealism were labeled as "degenerate art".

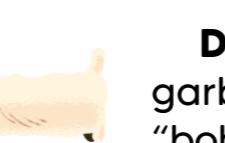
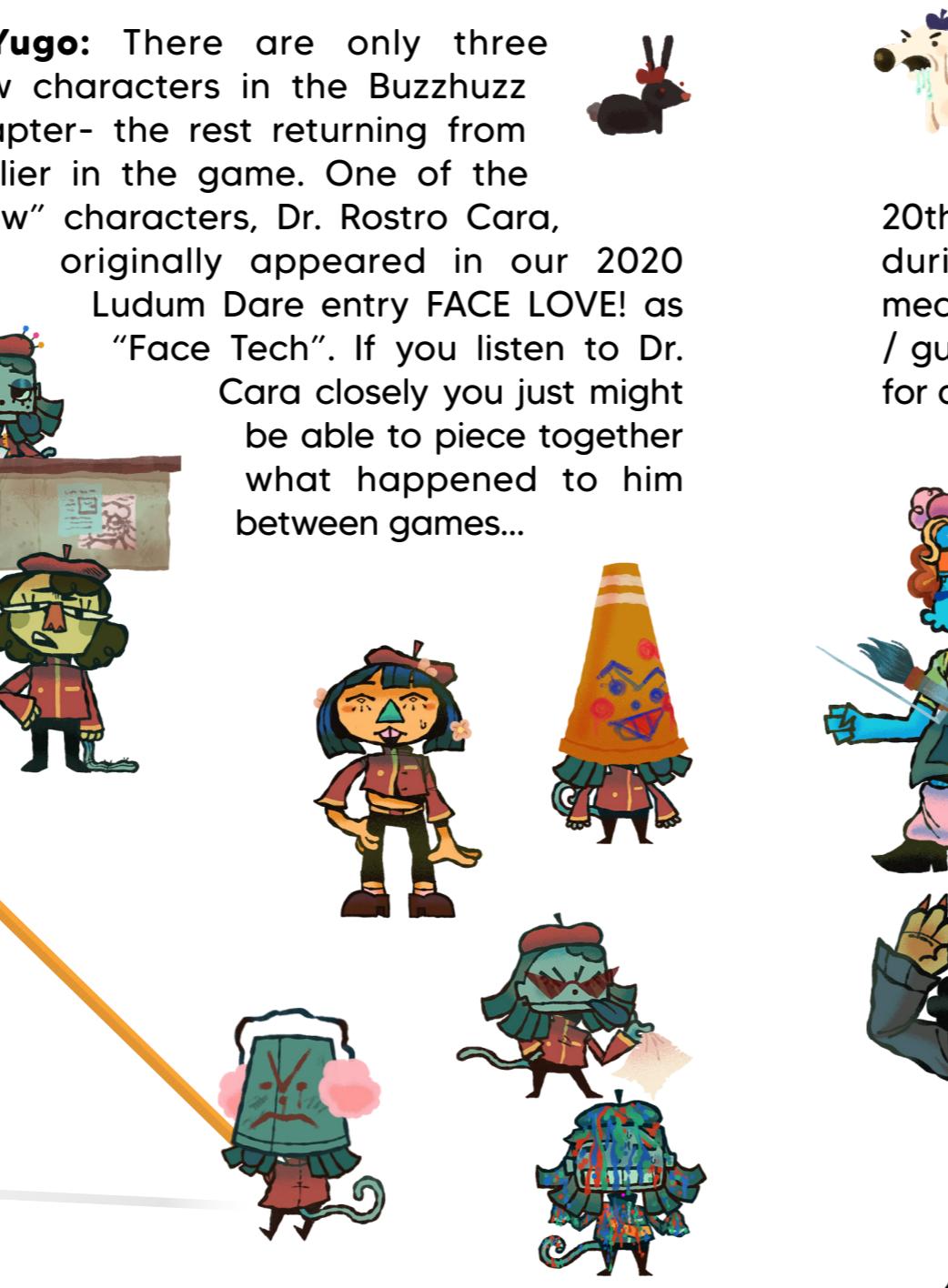






BuzzHuzz Characters

Yugo: There are only three new characters in the Buzzhuzz chapter- the rest returning from earlier in the game. One of the "new" characters, Dr. Rostro Cara, originally appeared in our 2020 Ludum Dare entry FACE LOVE! as "Face Tech". If you listen to Dr. Cara closely you just might be able to piece together what happened to him between games...

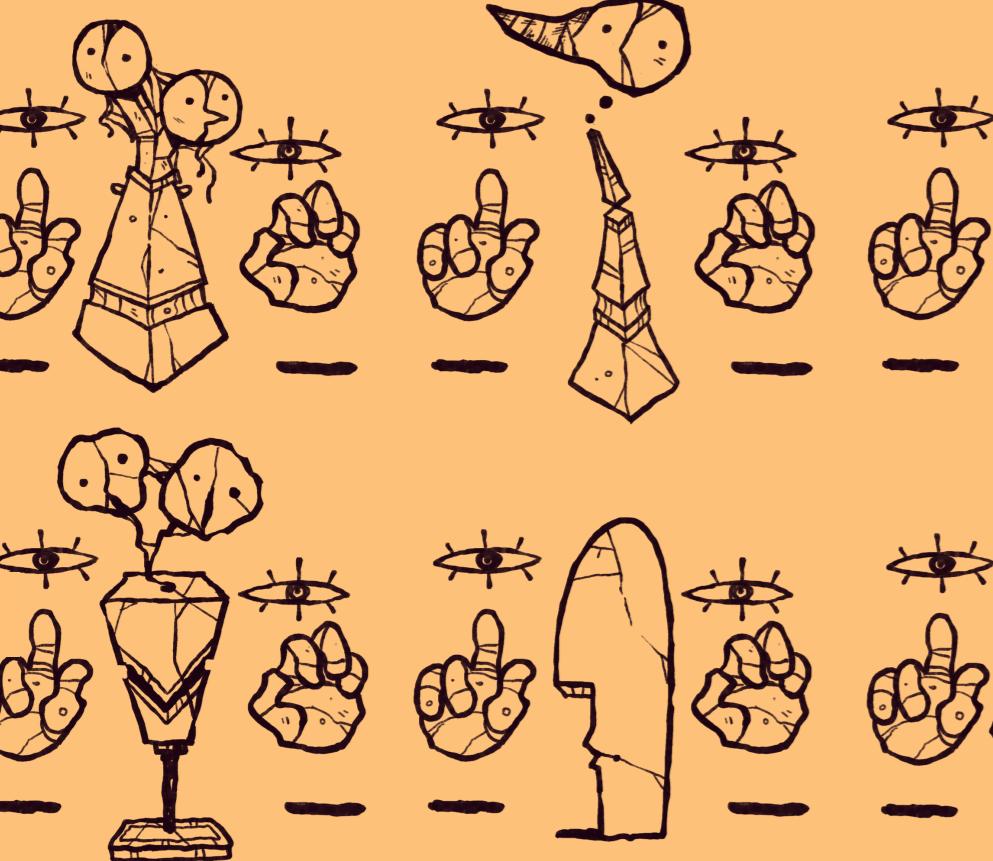


Day: The beret is stereotypically the garb of 19th century painters (via the "bohemian" starving artists of Paris), 19th century European army infantry, and 20th century countercultural rebels (like Che Guevara during the Cuban Revolution). The triple meaning of the beret and the guerrilla artist / guerilla warfare pun were the earliest ideas for a narrative throughline in BuzzHuzz.



BuzzHuzz Characters

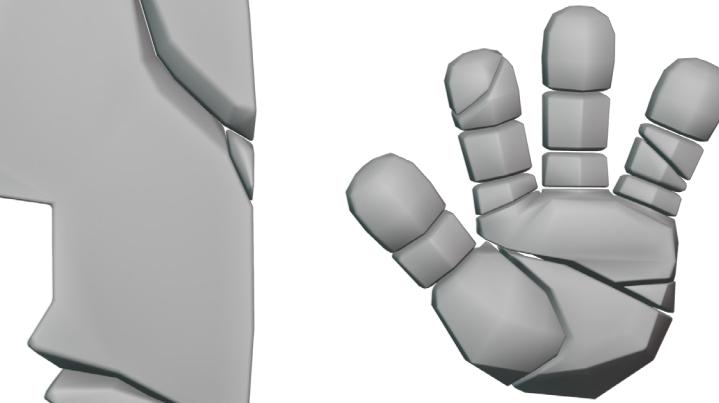
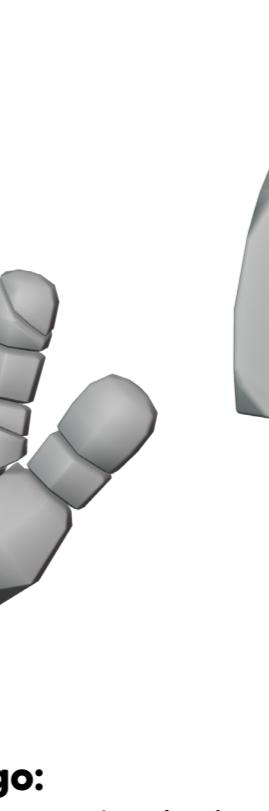
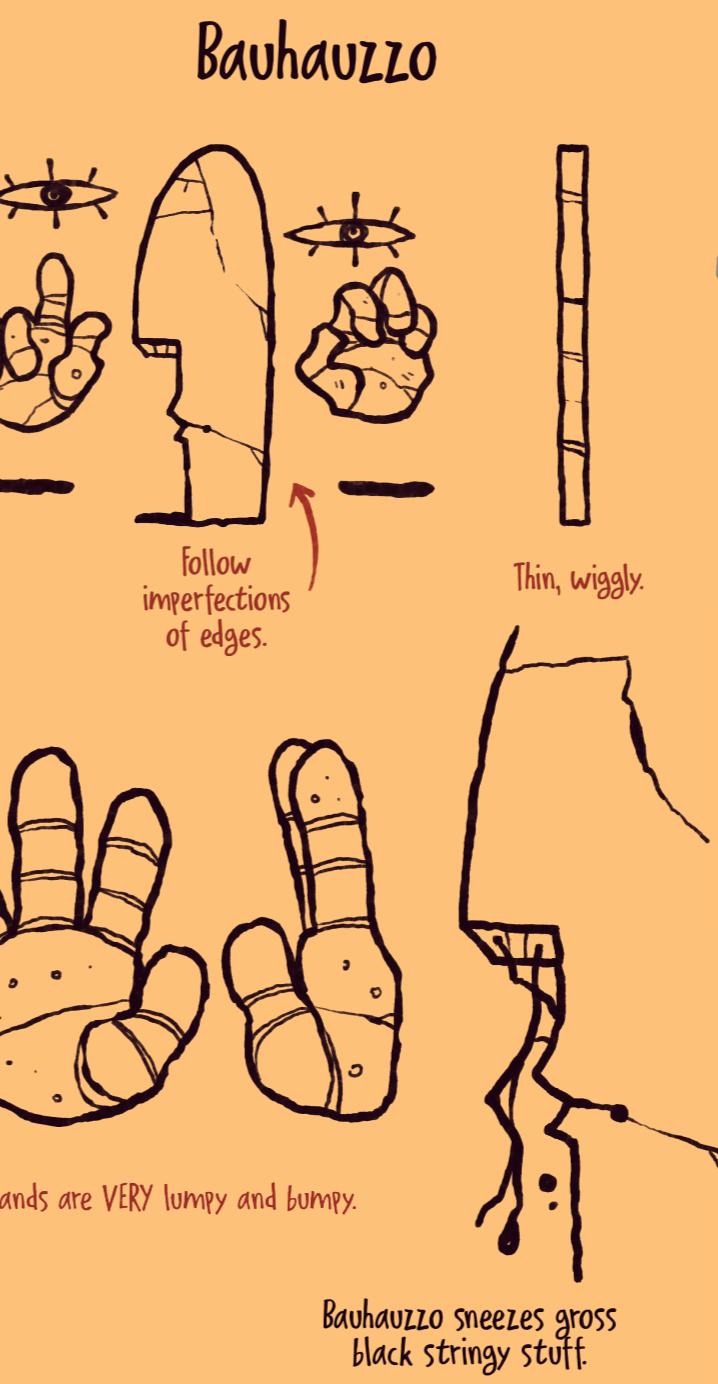




Doodle shapes float and boil above the ground line.

Scribble background boils slowly, on 8s or 10s.

Exaggerate perspective—
Bauhauzzo is **HUGE!**



Yugo:
Bauhauzzo's design comes from the face represented in the Bauhaus design movement's logo.

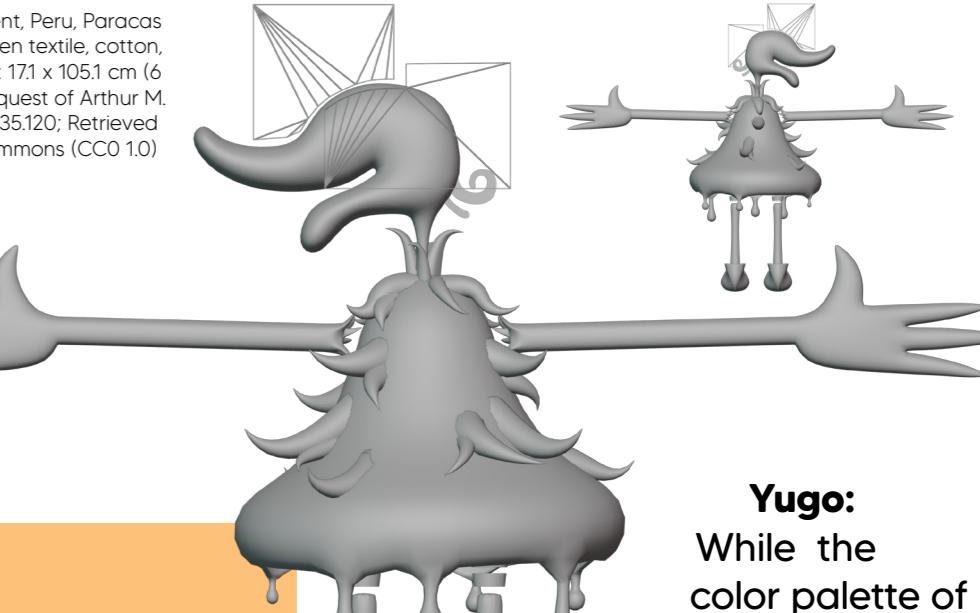
Despite Bauhaus design's "clean" and streamlined appearance, it too was considered "degenerate art." The German school Bauhaus style evolved from was shut down in the 1930s, referred to by the Nazis "as a center of communist intellectualism."

above: Dörte Helm (1923); "Bauhaus Exhibition Postcard No. 14"; Color offset lithograph; H x W: 15.2 x 10.5 cm (6 x 4 1/8 in.); Retrieved from Wikimedia Commons (CC0 1.0) November 9, 2004

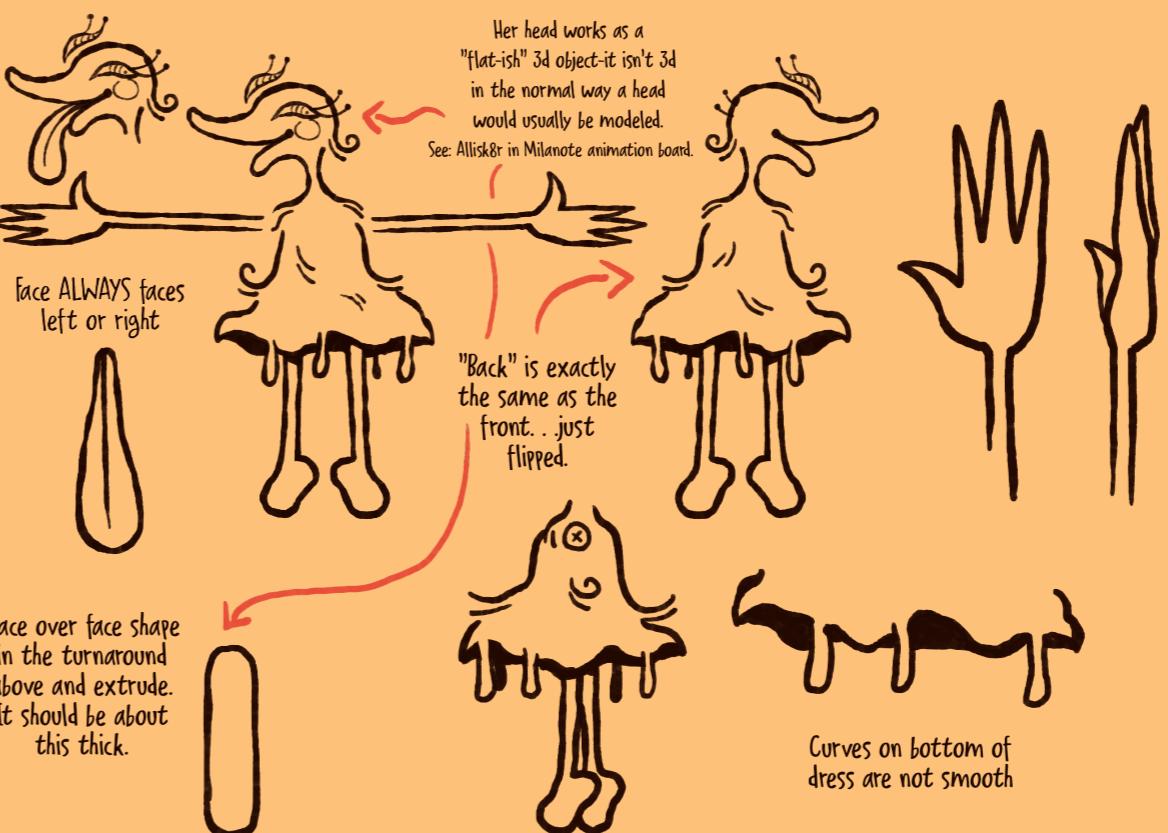




left: Border Fragment, Peru, Paracas (450–175 B.C.); Woven textile, cotton, camelid hair; H x W: 17.1 x 105.1 cm (6 3/4 x 41 3/8 in.); Bequest of Arthur M. Bullowa, 1993; 1994.35.120; Retrieved from Wikimedia Commons (CC0 1.0) November 9, 2004



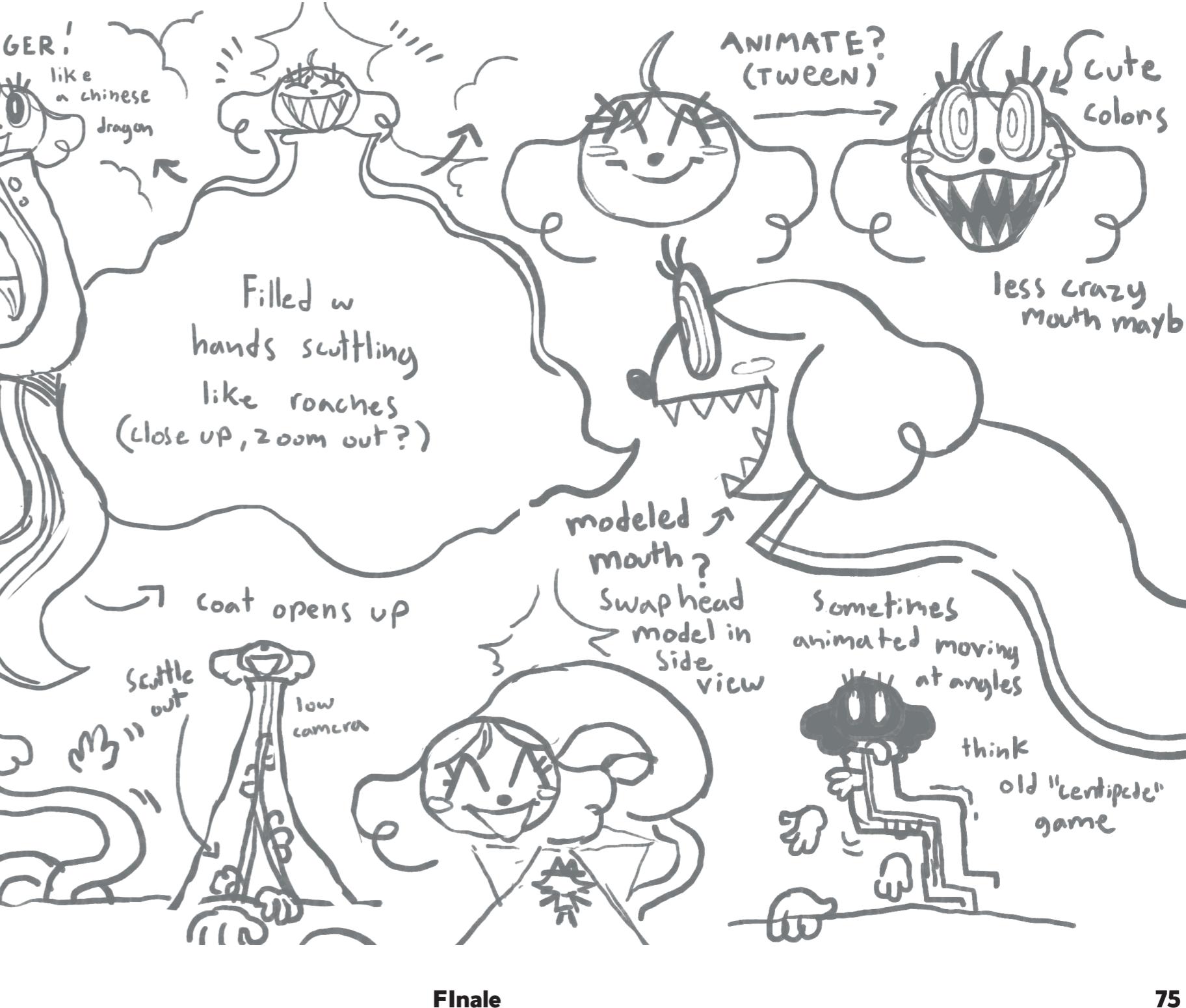
Yugo:
While the color palette of Huzzle Mug itself is sampled from a slightly tinted Trans flag, the color library of Huzzle's realm is was created by color picking ancient Paracas and Nasca textiles. Yume Nikki, which frequently references ancient Peruvian textiles, was a big inspiration for the surrealism/Huzzle aspects of Buzzhuzz.

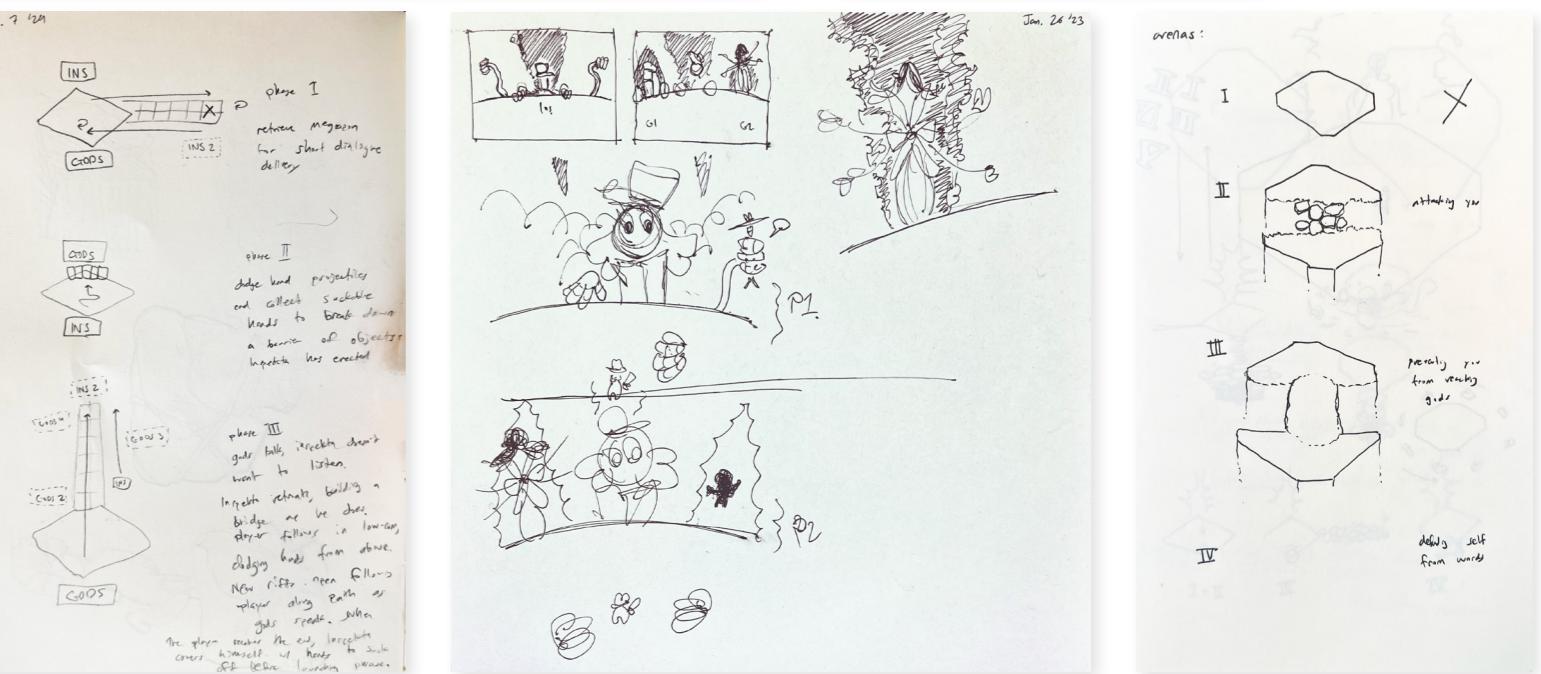
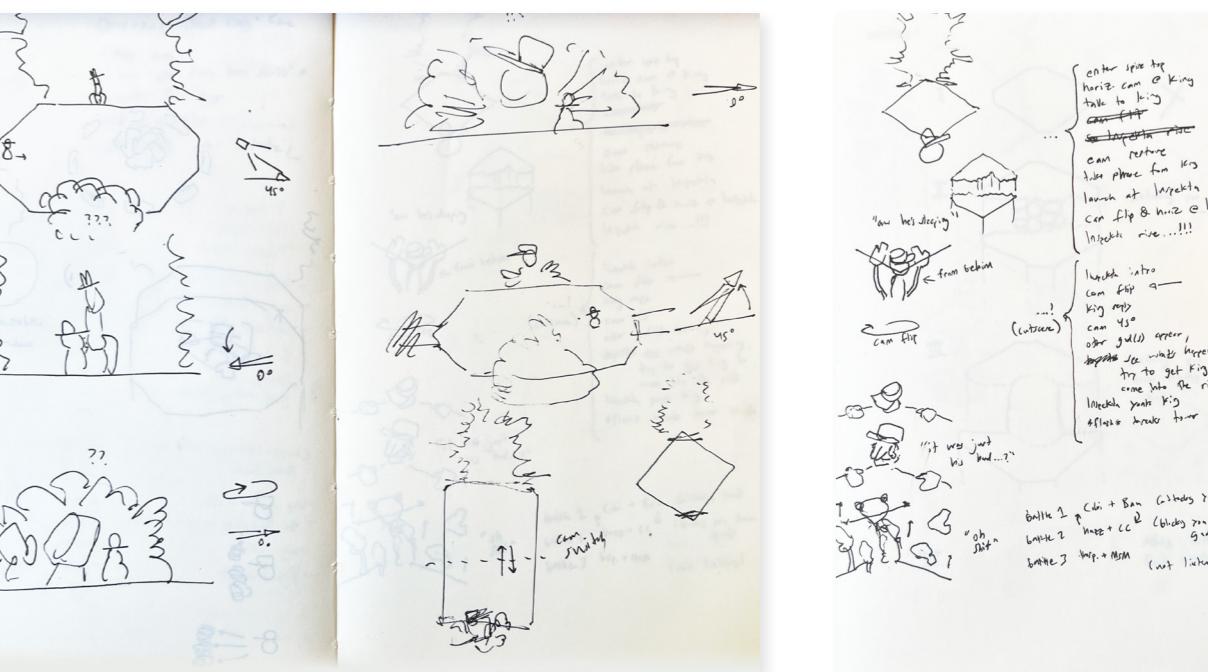
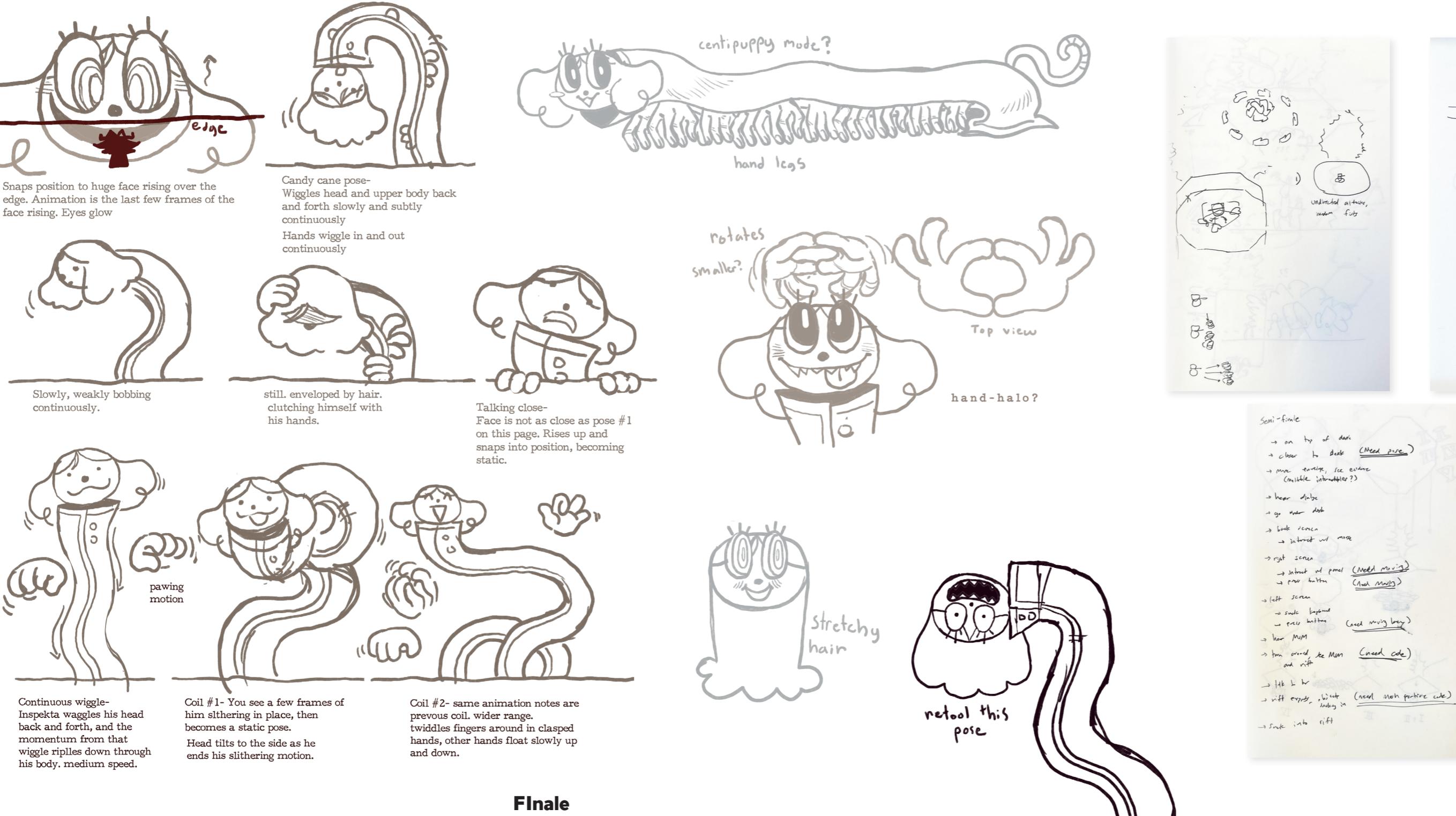


Huzzle Mug



Day: The Spire was the most involved part of the game to create- both technically and narratively. Weaving together all of the game's themes, all major characters, and both gameplay perspectives, it took over half a year to complete.



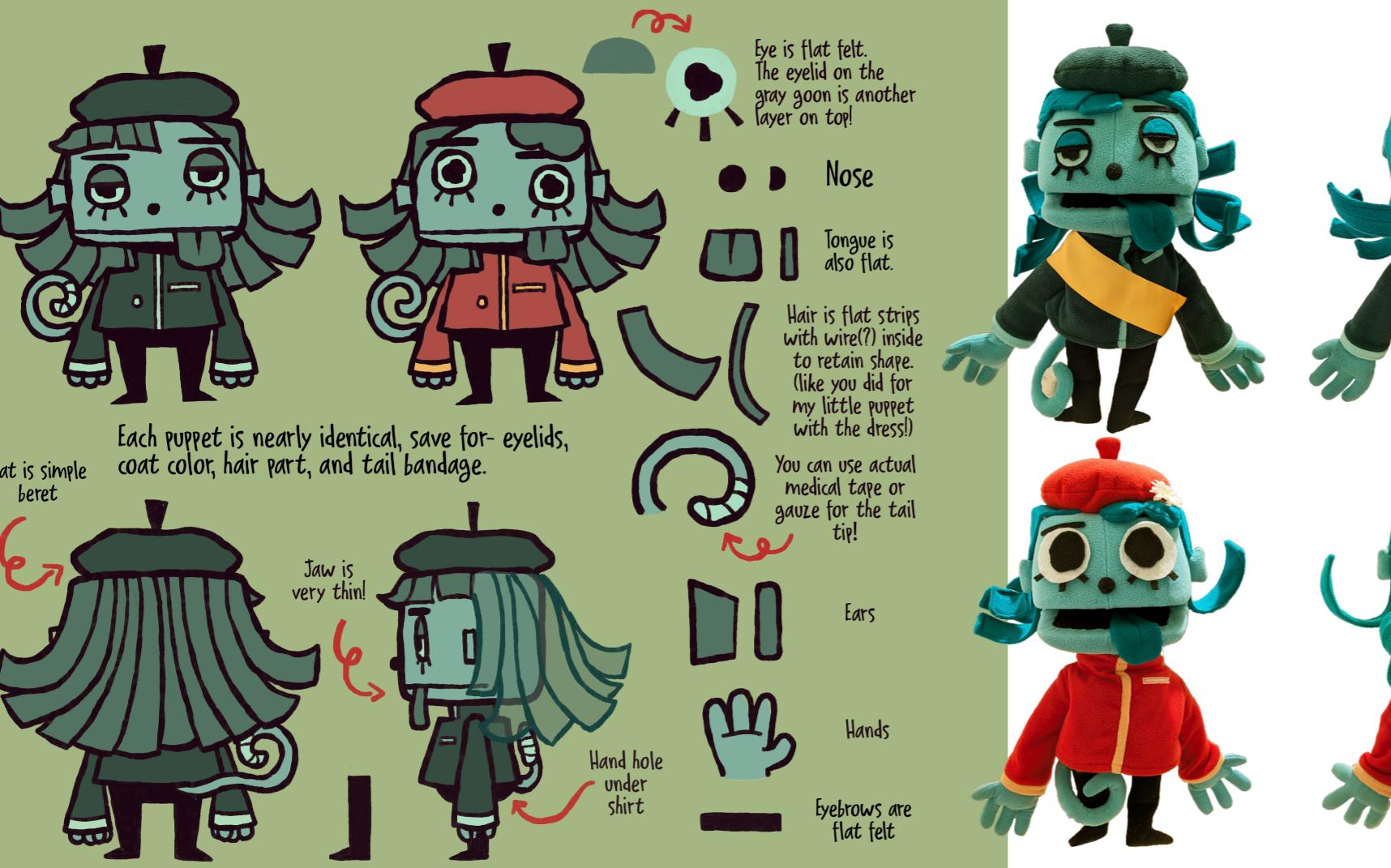




Yugo: Hector is a complicated guy. Someone who had nearly lost himself to loneliness and fear, corrupted by power, harming those who loved him most... finally having the wherewithal to withdraw from his position of power. It's hard to say if the people of the Grove will ever forgive him, but maybe they'll give him the chance to try to earn it.

This panel shows eight different expressions and poses for the character Yugo, who has large, expressive eyes and a wide-brimmed hat. The expressions range from neutral to surprised, angry, and distressed.





Yugo: The Bizzyboy puppets were crafted by Tody and Gabi ("The Circus Cottage")- who made the Dr. Habit puppet in Smile For Me. Just like last time, I handed them the schematics (above), picked fabrics, and communicated with them as they worked. When the bizzyboys were redesigned to make them each more individual, we abandoned the old puppet eyes in favor of swappable face parts/accessories so that the puppet could be transformed into any one of the in-game Bizzyboys.



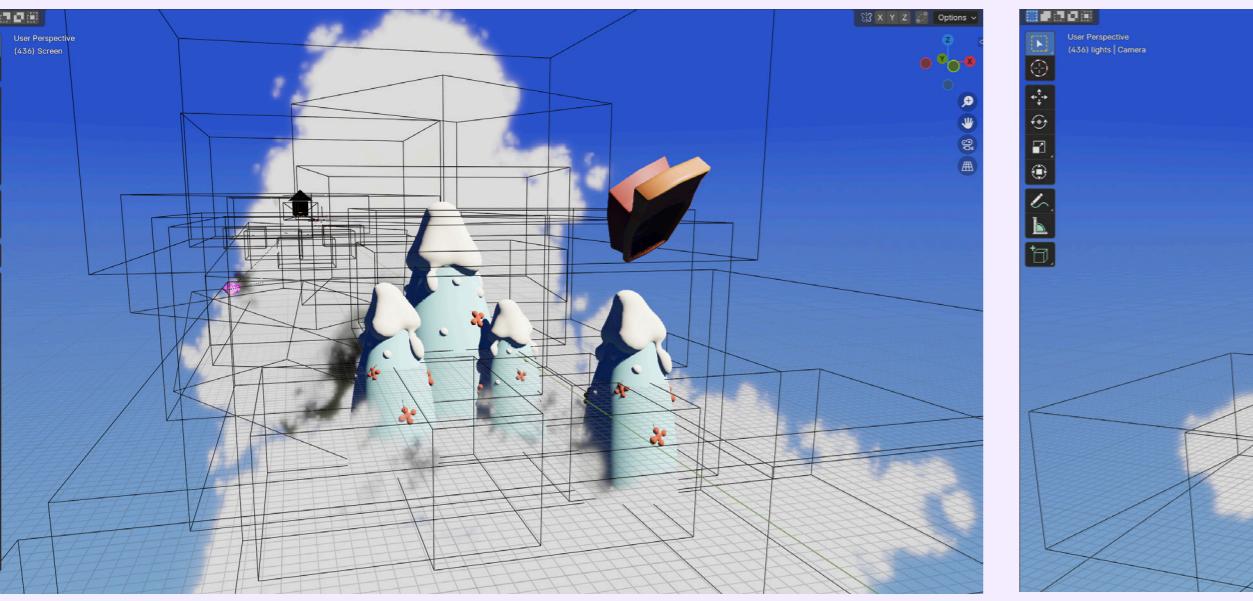




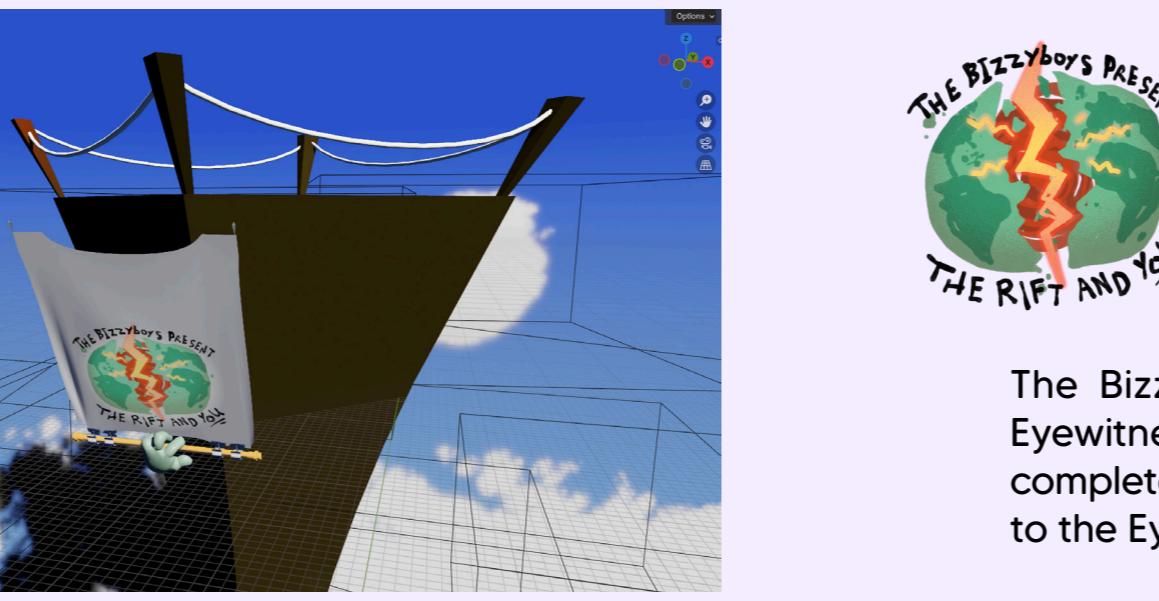
above: Crow S helps out on the set of "The Grove And You"- then it's selfie time!



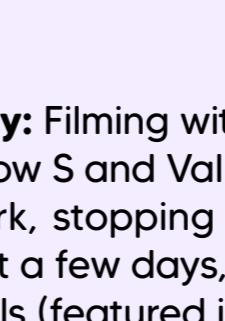
opposite: Yugo and Crow S serve up a plate of blue-dyed steak, right from the heart of Capochin



above: Blender models used to animate the Bizzyboy video intro



below: Screenshots of the Bizzyboy video intro in-game

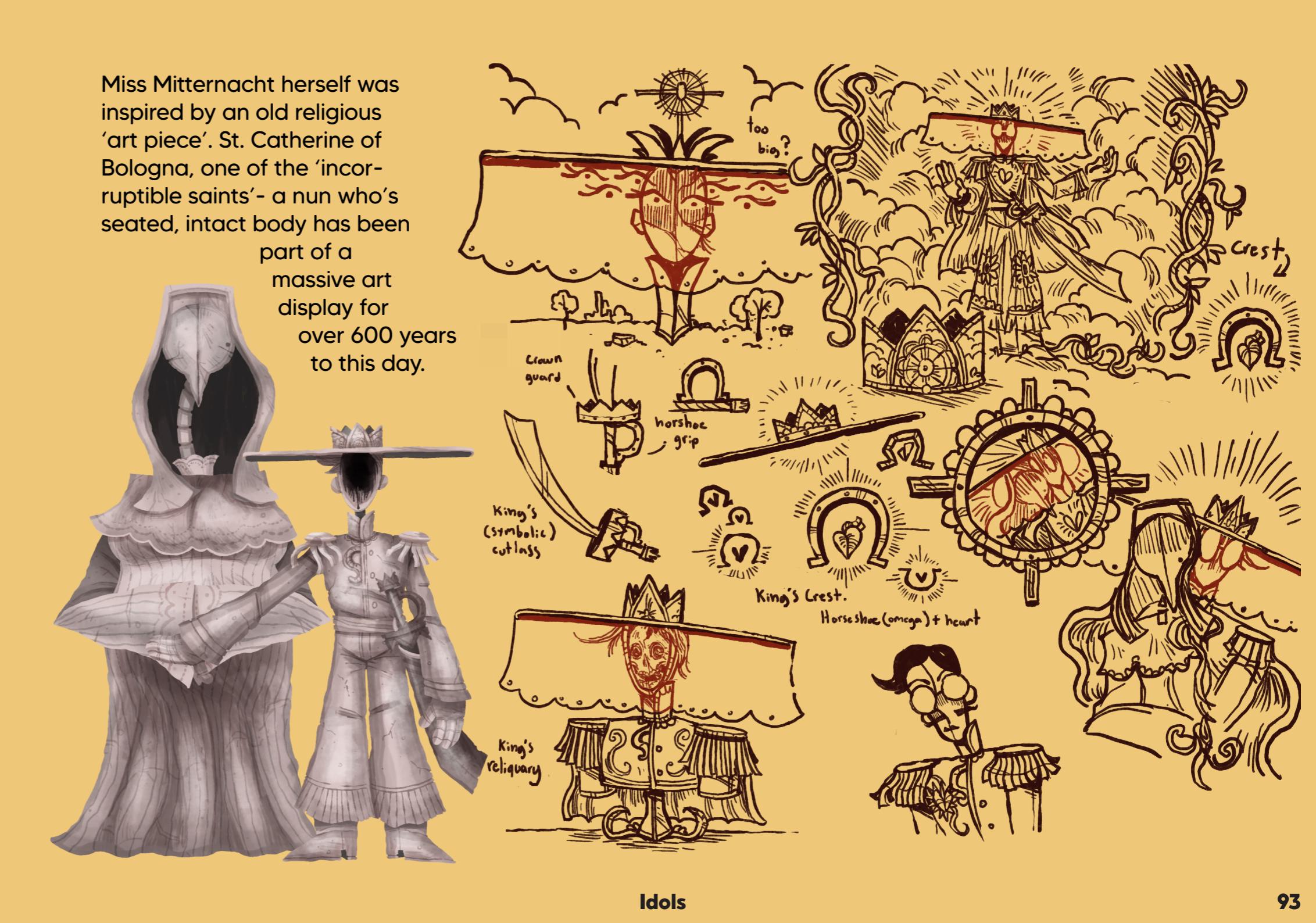


Day: Filming with Yugo is always a blast. This time around, we had help from Crow S and Val Eerie. Crow and I were on a cross-country roadtrip from New York, stopping in Seattle to film. We banged out all 4 in-game videos in just a few days, shooting in Yugo's apartment, public parks, and Snoqualmie Falls (featured in David Lynch's Twin Peaks).

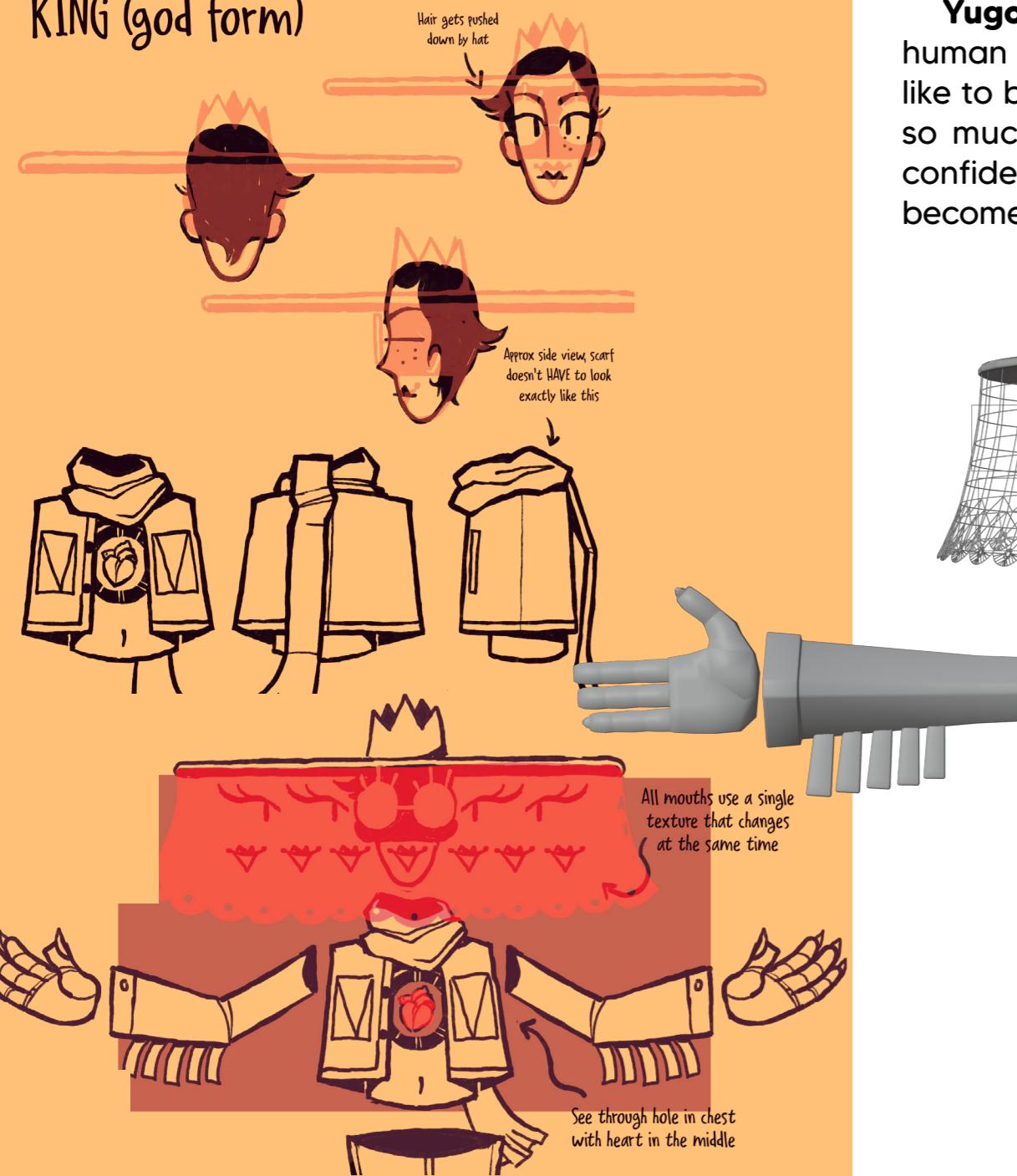
The Bizzyboy instructional videos were inspired by the British educational program Eyewitness (1994 - 1997). I modeled and rendered a kitchy intro animation of the Grove-complete with dated shading- and Louie Zong composed a musical track that pays homage to the Eyewitness intro theme by Guy Michelmore



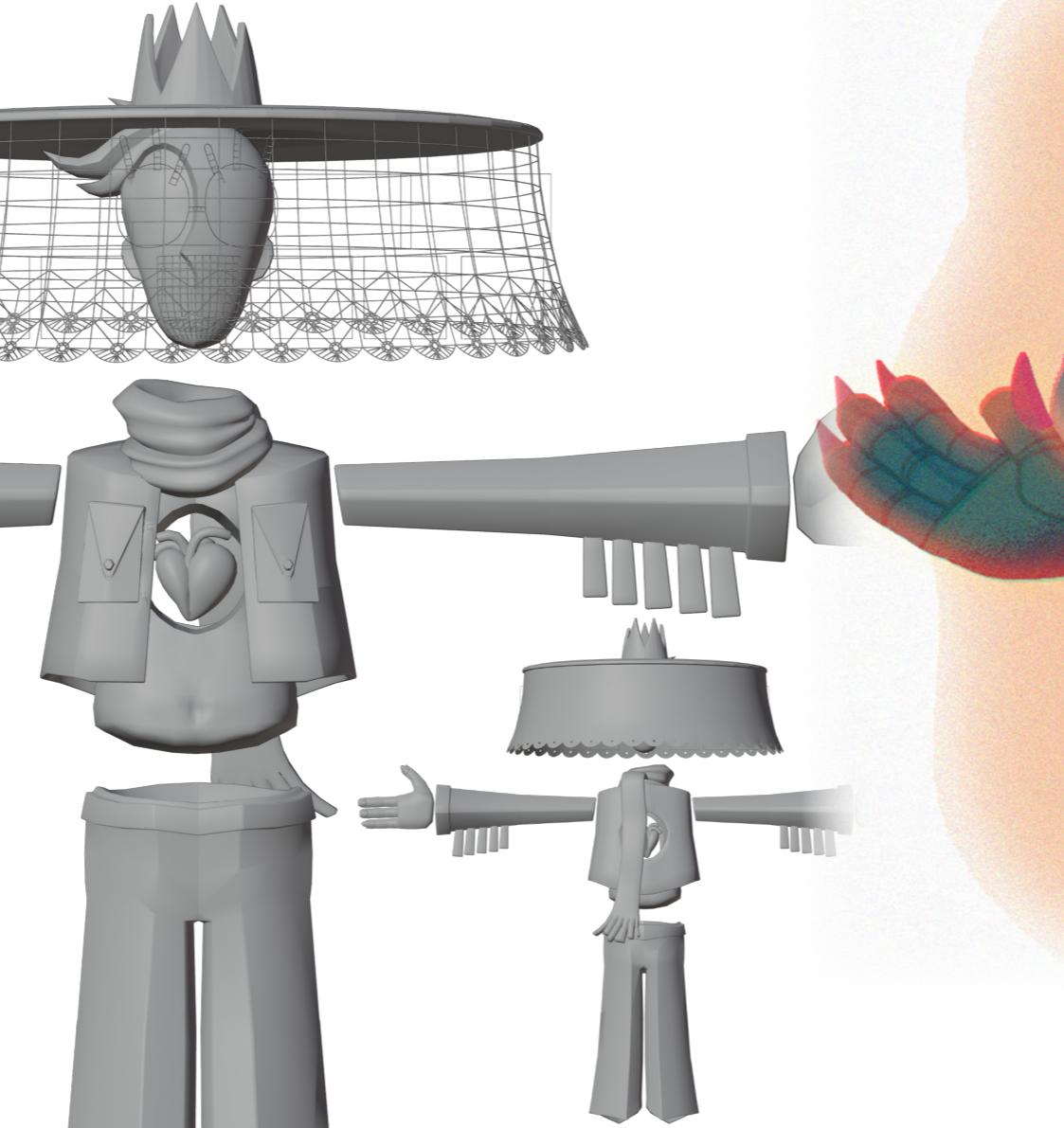




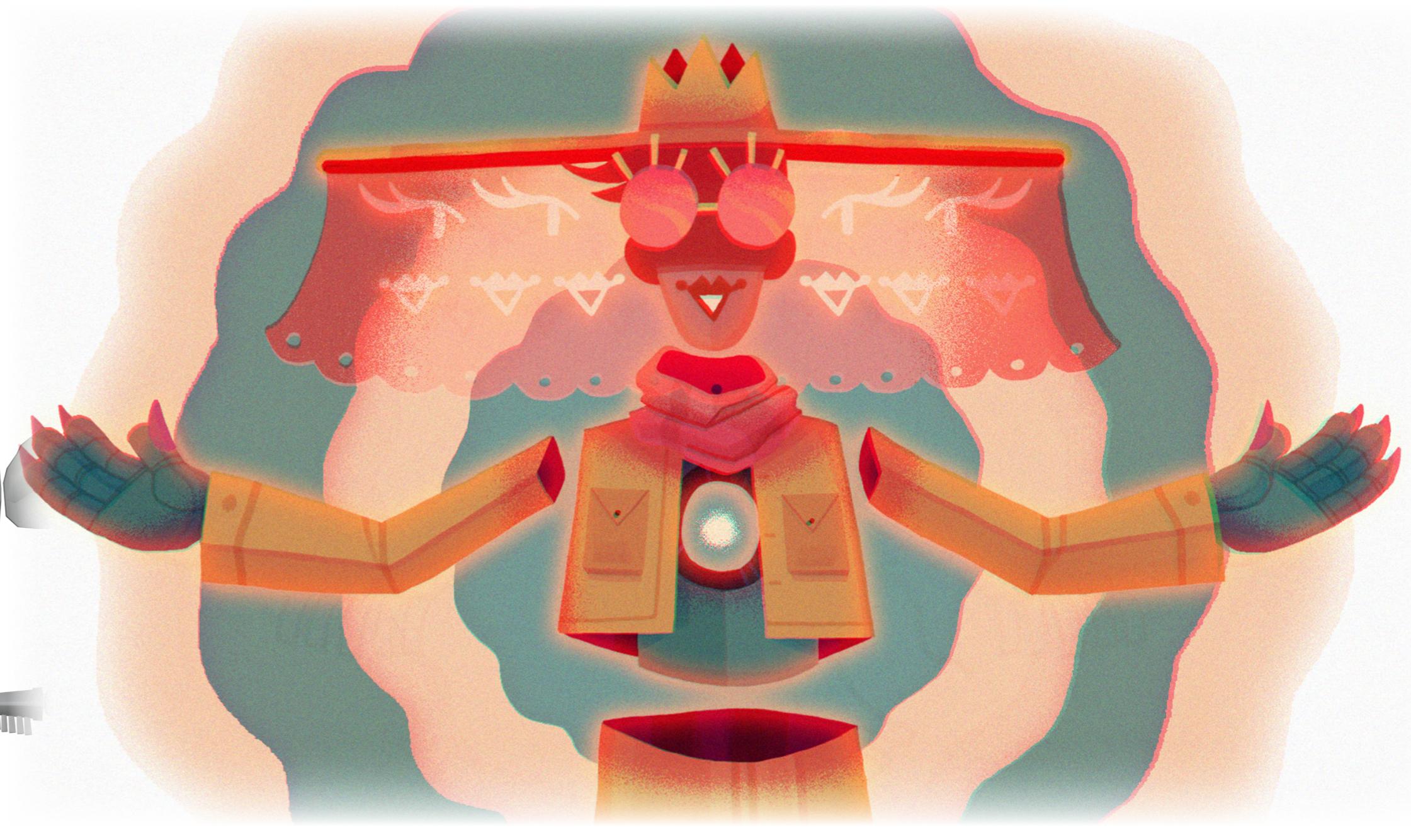
KING (god form)



King (god)



King (god)



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The logo for Limbo Lane, featuring the word "LIMBO" in a bold, black, sans-serif font above the word "LANE" in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. The entire logo is enclosed in a thin, black rectangular border.



LIMBOLANE
GAMES

